

George Washington Reconsidered—*Edmund Morgan*

Social Justice and Productivity • Narcissism and the Family

THE NEW REPUBLIC

February 21, 1981

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TRB[®]

from Washington
February 21, 1981

Airborne

We're going down the runway now in the Reagan administration's first flight. This week the president gives Congress his economic package. Fasten your seat belt; we're airborne! It could be a momentous trip.

What a surprising crew. Take the president, our first communicator-executive. We'd hardly have thought it possible before. I have a column by Stewart Alsop from the *Saturday Evening Post*, November 9, 1965, telling about "the leading Republican candidate for governor of California" and describing "the speech." It sounds "less like a political speech than a turn, an act, a well-rehearsed performance," says Alsop, "Ronald Reagan playing the aroused citizen saving America from the menace of creeping socialism." At regular intervals "the doom-laden warnings of enslavement by the federal bureaucracy are relieved by a joke ('Government is like a baby—an alimentary canal with a big appetite at one end and no sense of responsibility at the other.')." Alsop's reservations about the performance weren't necessary: it carried Reagan to the governorship and to the presidency.

And he's just as attractive now as he was then, projecting old-fashioned patriotism. He couldn't let a group of five reporters depart from an informal gathering without leaving them with a final reminiscence about an old-fashioned silent movie, a corny West-

ern, in which one of the outlaws suggests robbing the mail train. And invariably the outlaw leader, Reagan recalled, would tell him no. He could rob the bank, or the stagecoach if he must, but not the mail train: "'You don't monkey around with Uncle Sam!' And everybody in the theater would cheer and break into applause no matter how many times they'd heard it. 'How long has it been,'" asked Reagan "since anyone felt that way about our national government?" And he said that's what he wants, to bring back our faith in Uncle Sam. (Martial music from the pianist in the pit below.)

If I were to predict who will be the four or five most influential men in the new government I would put Ed Meese near the top. That's Edwin Meese III. You won't see his name so often in the headlines or his comfortable, intelligent, slightly pudgy face on the front page. He is merely general manager of the United States. He gets his authority because he is a detail man and Reagan isn't and because the president trusts him. It was that way in California where he was legal secretary in the first administration and later chief of staff. A lot of normal friction between cabinet and White House staff will be lubricated, I guess, by unobtrusive Ed Meese. I watch him at a press breakfast one morning. He is ruddy and blond, several address him as "Ed," he has few gestures and keeps hand folded; now he releases his right hand to give modest, reassuring waves, like a composer leading an orchestra through a *diminuendo*. His title is counselor to the president and he quietly says that his job is "development of policy" and "working with the cabinet." I think he is one of those unassuming politicians who make things run smoothly, not ambitious like FDR's Jim Farley, but the organizer and transmitter of the boss's desires. I asked the onetime head of the Reagan transition team where Meese points ideologically. "He leans very, very far to the right; he's very conservative."

Ronald Reagan has come to office with two powerful drives, each of which makes me shiver a little: he believes he can end domestic inflation by cutting taxes (and federal expenditures, too, if Congress will go along with him), and he believes he can make Moscow see reason by building defenses and rejecting the Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty that Carter negotiated. Alexander Haig is secretary of state, the second general in history to hold the job.

Haig's triangular face with high cheekbones is mobile, with power written all over it; he can give a small grin that makes him look like a faun, and he can freeze an opponent with a scowl. He is the most formidable of Reagan's team. He hardly took the oath of office before denouncing the Russians, and Reagan goes along with him. (Reagan wants Uncle Sam respected, the way he was in the old movies.) "I think the two systems are on a collision course," responds Carter's Russian ambassador Thomas Watson on TV last week. A new arms race could be "desperately dangerous," says Watson. He sounds like a softie.

Meanwhile the other Reagan theme is coming to Congress after weeks of softening-up bombardment, the theme of economic revival: cut expenditures, cut taxes, stimulate production. Here the two top Reagan leaders are Donald Regan, former chairman of Merrill Lynch, the country's biggest stockbroker, and David Stockman, the 34-year-old budget director, the most meteoric figure to burst over Washington since FDR's Tommy the Cork (Thomas G. Corcoran).

Regan impresses me. The name is confusing. The rhyme goes, "Said Donald Regan to Ronald Reagan, 'You did a fine job putting Haig in.'" He is genial, suave, hawk-nosed, broad-shouldered, with flashes of fire, a kind of opposite number to Haig on the domestic side. He is a late convert, I believe, to the Kemp-Roth theology, the fastest growing religion in Washington.

Stockman, of course, is a true believer in the theology. He is the one who gets on the front page of *Newsweek*. His rise, his rapid-fire delivery, his ferocity for work and advancement, are rather frightening. He was an anti-Vietnam activist, a Harvard Divinity School fellow, an ambitious young man slowly growing more conservative. In 1976 he won his own congressional seat from Michigan. He helped prepare Ronald Reagan for his debates with John Anderson and Carter by representing them in preliminary practice debates, a charade that so impressed the victorious president that he made him budget director. It should be remembered that a lot of economists are leery of Kemp-Roth. It's never been fully tried; it's a theory. Can Congress lick inflation by a formula that includes huge tax cuts? Reagan is as optimistic here as he is about his other breathtaking experiment: facing down Russia. So we're off. Fasten your seat belts, we're airborne.

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Contents

TRB from Washington	3	Airborne
Comment	5	Crime Wave
Morton Kondracke	6	Politics: Off the Canvas
	7	Correspondence
Nicholas von Hoffman	10	A Fool and His Money: Tool Up for the 1980s
Bart Rubenstein	11	Nick's Picks . . . Bart's Charts
Tad Szulc	12	Deciphering the Russians
Gar Alperovitz and Jeff Faux	14	Marching to Dunkirk
Charles Krauthammer	17	The Mea Culpa Generation
Robert B. Reich	20	The Liberal Promise of Prosperity
		Books and the Arts
Stanley Kauffmann	24	Films: Mixed Grills
Edmund S. Morgan	25	A Sense of Power
Nathan Irvin Huggins	31	<i>White Supremacy</i> by George M. Fredrickson
Anthony Storr	33	<i>Prisoners of Childhood</i> by Alice Miller
John Hollander	34	Poem: "A Time of Year"
Martin Jay	35	<i>Jean-Paul Sartre—Philosophy in the World</i> by Ronald Aronson
Michele Slung	38	<i>Firestarter</i> by Stephen King
Meredith Marsh	39	<i>Clear Light of Day</i> by Anita Desai
	40	Brief Review:
Marc Granetz		<i>Housekeeping</i> by Marilynne Robinson
Traveler's Diarist	43	Innovations

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February 21, 1981



Crime Wave

Chief Justice Warren Burger's amazing outburst at the American Bar Association Convention, and early word from the Reagan Justice Department, indicate that we are entering a new period of national breast-beating about crime. As a political issue, this subject has been in remission since the heyday of the Nixon administration. This sudden increase in concern about crime does not follow any nationwide increase in crime itself. According to the National Crime Survey of the Justice Department, the level of serious crime has remained stable since 1973. There are, for example, about six robberies (muggings) per 1,000 people each year, about one rape per 1,000, about 10 aggravated assaults (involving serious injury), and so on. Household burglaries have actually dropped, from about 91 per 1,000 to about 84 per 1,000, whereas household larcenies (theft without a break-in) have increased from 107 to about 133 per 1,000. These figures are much higher than in other countries, but they suggest no criminal epidemic. They also do not support the Chief Justice's assertion that the United States is "approaching the status of an impotent society" incapable of "maintaining elementary security" and victimized by "day-to-day terrorism." Mr. Burger is right that we should "not be misled by clichés and slogans." This includes his own.

Nevertheless, crime is an issue liberals dare not ignore or appear callous about. It is one of the main causes of defection from the liberal camp among Jews and other urban ethnics, among suburbanites, even among blacks. The straw man Burger criticizes—the one who insists the only cure for crime is to end poverty—in fact has almost no real-life counterparts, and it's important to make this clear. If people think liberals believe poverty is a reason for ignoring crime, crime will become a reason for ignoring poverty.

Under his steamy rhetoric, Burger offered proposals in three fairly mundane categories. First, he urged more money for law enforcement. This is unobjectionable until the question arises about where the money will come from. When he says the fight against crime "is as much a part of our national defense as the budget of the Pentagon," he presumably is not eyeing the Pentagon budget as a place to finance his fight.

Burger's second prescription is speedier and more certain conviction and incarceration of criminals. His criticism of the present system permitting endless and repeated appeals of "technical errors, unrelated to guilt or innocence" is, by and large, justified, and Burger's own court is busily undoing some of these excesses. But Burger's suggestion that people who are arrested but not convicted should be denied bail if some judge thinks they might be dangerous is itself dangerous. In this country, people are presumed innocent until convicted, and innocent people should not be locked up. Greatly speeding up the trial and appeal process, as Burger suggests, and narrowing procedural loopholes in getting convictions, are better ways to get criminals off the streets.

Burger's third set of suggestions concern improved prison conditions and rehabilitation efforts. Anyone with the slightest human sympathy and the vaguest knowledge of life in typical American prisons would support improving conditions there, but this is hardly a recipe for reducing crime. Nor is there much evidence to support a belief in rehabilitation. Those, like Burger, who want to throw criminals in jail in order to deter crime must have the courage of their convictions (so to speak), and not pretend they are doing the criminals any favor. Liberals might usefully insist that greater certainty of punishment, once achieved should permit shorter prison sentences without any

reduced deterrent effect.

Two days after Burger's speech came word that the Justice Department is planning a "package of legislative proposals" against violent crime. Attorney General William French Smith said at his confirmation hearing that violent crime would be his department's top priority. It's funny. Every day the Reagan administration declares that yet another social welfare program should be turned over to state and local government, which can be more responsive to people's needs. Yet when a need arises that they really wish to respond to, the Reaganauts are proposing expanded federal power faster than you can say "LBJ." Maintaining law and order is the classic example of a government function that belongs on the local level if federalism has any meaning at all. We have no theological objection to a greater role for the national government. But the Reagan administration's eagerness to nationalize the fight against crime does heighten our suspicions that its desire to denationalize welfare and environmental regulation is based less on high regard for federalism than on low regard for welfare and environmentalism.

As it happens, two aspects of the fight against crime are especially suitable for national treatment. One is white-collar crime, which frequently involves financial transactions across state lines and even international borders. Attorney General Smith already has made clear his intention to deemphasize white-collar criminal prosecution. The other aspect is gun control. In a society with completely open internal borders, it is impossible for any state to protect its citizens against guns manufactured and sold anywhere in the country. Sensible gun control legislation would be the very best thing the federal government could do to help fight crime—and it's something *only* the federal government can do effectively. So far, the Reagan Justice Department and the newly voluble Chief Justice have not mentioned it.

Politics

Off the Canvas

It is a pleasure to report that despite the November election results, the liberal movement in America is not dead. It is still a little stunned—no, it is *very* stunned—but less than four months after sustaining an eight-million-vote electoral shock, the patient has awakened, arisen, and undertaken a host of new activities. Naturally, liberals and other Democrats have been spending much of their waking time talking about what hit them on November 4, and how they got in its way. There is no consensus, but there has been surprisingly little scapegoating. Instead, there seems to be a general resolve that lots of different

things went wrong in 1980 and that repair work needs to be done on all of them. This a progress report on the beginning of that work. There's no telling where it will lead. Deep divisions still exist between the right and left wings of the Democratic party and its center is confused, so undoubtedly there are internal conflicts ahead. The good news is that Democrats still think there's something worth fighting about.

Just after the election debacle, there was a spate of unproductive recrimination about why the Democrats lost, with Carter loyalists implying that if Edward Kennedy had not run against the former president, if liberals had only hung in with him, Ronald Reagan never would have won. Such grouching has dissipated, primarily because there are very few die-hard Carter loyalists and because there is widespread agreement among Democrats that Carter's ineptitude was at least one major contributing factor to the Democrats' defeat. Edward Kennedy's candidacy was a result, not a cause, of Carter's weakness.

But it's clear that Jimmy Carter was only one factor in the 1980 debacle. As Democratic political analyst Michael Barone pointed out in a recent paper, 1980 was the culmination of a steady slide for the party. In the last four presidential elections, the Democratic candidate's percentage of the popular vote has been 43, 38, 50, and 41. This year, for the first time since 1952, the Republicans not only won the Senate, but received 50 percent of all popular votes cast for US representatives. "Democrats should be aware that they have long since ceased to enjoy any natural majority," Barone said, "and they no longer have the luxury of behaving as the majority party."

There seems to be widespread agreement that the party can't rest on its withered laurels or rely for salvation on the possibility that Ronald Reagan's conservative nostrums will fail. Efforts to revive the party and the liberal movement fall into two general categories: organizational and intellectual.

The first category includes a forthcoming effort to strengthen the election-winning machinery of the Democratic National Committee, the establishment of new fundraising political action committees to aid Democratic candidates, and the founding of several new organizations to do battle with the new right. From a fundraising standpoint, adversity has proved lucrative for liberal groups. Americans for Democratic Action, the ACLU, the Arms Control Association, and the National Abortion Rights Action League, for example, all report record responses to their fundraising appeals since the Republicans won in November.

On the intellectual side, at least one new moderate liberal think tank is being formed, the Democratic Policy Institute, and others are in the talking stage. Meanwhile, some existing idea factories are contemplating expansion in order to influence debate over a new liberal agenda. They include the Coalition for a Democratic Majority on the right and the Institute for

(continued on page 8)

Correspondence

I am not a mole

To the editors:

Morton Kondracke's article "Search for Subversion" in your January 31 issue contains two errors which I would like to correct before they become accepted myths. James Angleton has never charged that I might be or have been a Soviet "mole." Mr. Angleton has assured me of this directly, and others have confirmed it. We have our professional differences but other individuals were the source of that particular bit of fancy, which, as you note, I have flatly denied. The second error is that not even the unflattering, thinly veiled, and poisonously warped remarks in *The Spike* go so far as to assert that its "fictitious" director of Central Intelligence was a Soviet spy.

My sensitivity on these two points stems from sharing Kondracke's main theme, that facile conspiracy theories can divert us from the sterner tasks of reviving our intelligence capabilities within our constitutional processes.

W. E. Colby
New York, New York

Changing the rules

To the editors:

I applaud your inclusion of Michael Walzer's brilliant article, "Democracy vs. Elections," in your January 3 & 10 issue. He states the case for a retreat from the present presidential primary system toward a more party-oriented system quite well. However, I wouldn't be as quick to dismiss the reforms of shortening the primary season and going to regional primaries as he is. Such changes might have the same effect as adopting the system of caucuses and conventions that he favors.

If the primaries and caucuses didn't begin until, say, the first week of May, and if the primary season consisted of, say, eight to 12 regional primaries each separated by a single week, there wouldn't be enough time for someone like Jimmy Carter to create a bandwagon effect that would have him painted as unbeatable by the season's end. Other changes should accompany these reforms, of course. All primaries should be closed. All candidates should be required to enter all primaries (to prevent a candidate from picking and

choosing his or her primaries to distort the picture of the process). Party members in Congress, as well as state party leaders, should be guaranteed seats at the national convention, apart from the selection of delegates in the primaries.

With no candidate able to come from nowhere and get the media spotlight through the primary process, a much larger number of primary voters will remain undecided about the candidates, and the uncommitted delegates will likely have the largest block going into the convention. With no front-runner able to knock most of the other candidates out of the race in the primaries, the national convention will truly be open, with a number of candidates competing for uncommitted votes and for the support of those candidates who have less chance of building a winning coalition and of the party pros who would again have leverage over selection of the nominee.

Activists will still participate, as they do in the current primary system. The primary debate farces will have less justification, because long-distance runners won't be obsessed with going for 18 months without saying anything. The different candidates' policy preferences would be a major factor in the bargaining for support at the convention.

A system of state conventions would work just as well, but a move to a later-starting and much briefer series of regional primaries might be less difficult to achieve. Work toward that goal has to proceed vigorously and at once if there's any chance of it succeeding in time for the 1984 election. At the current rate candidates for that year's nominations should start to announce their candidacies next summer.

Lester G. Boutillier
New Orleans, Louisiana

To the editors:

Michael Walzer's thoughtful piece prompts this comment from one who has attended four national Democratic Conventions between 1960 and 1976 and was a member of the Democratic National Committee for eight years and of its Executive Committee for four.

We in Colorado have been utilizing a system for many years which gives influence to parties yet provides a role

in the nominating process for the non-activist. Our system, a combination of caucus/convention/primary, operates along the following lines: precinct caucuses are held at which delegates to county conventions are elected. County conventions composed of such delegates in turn elect delegates to state convention. Those who seek positions on the state primary ballot are required to receive, at the state convention, 20 percent of the votes. The candidates so designated for the primary ballot have positions on the ballot from top to bottom, depending on the number of votes received at convention. This ballot priority produces withdrawal of candidacy, in many instances, by those who receive low vote for designation. Subsequently a statewide primary is held at which those registered as affiliated with the party vote. The candidate of the party is nominated for the general election at this primary election.

In order for a candidate to receive designation for the primary ballot, he or she must manifest sufficient coalition-forming ability and have sufficient party support to bring those characteristics to his or her candidacy. The winnowing out effected at convention makes the process party involved, yet there is preserved input and influence from those who do not engage in politics as a career.

Extension of the system to the national level would require some change in current election laws, would require registration of party affiliation as a prerequisite to voting in the primary, and would require a primary election to follow the national conventions.

Arnold Alperstein
Denver, Colorado

Adieu, 18th-century economics

To the editors:

The news that Stephen Chapman has left *TNR* to write for the *Chicago Tribune* strikes me as one of those rare happenings that will increase the satisfaction of all those involved. Chapman is a bright young man obviously out of place on the staff of a liberal magazine. Readers of *TNR* will welcome his departure and those of the more conservative *Tribune* will no doubt find his version of 18th-century economic doctrine to their liking.

Russell I. Thackrey
Manhattan, Kansas

Policy Studies and the Center for Economic Alternatives on the left. Already one new political journal has been started, Max Palevsky's *democracy*. Doubtless there will be more.

Much of the new liberal activity is unashamedly modeled on successful inventions by the Republicans and the right. Charles Manatt, the front-running candidate for Democratic national chairman, openly admits that he wants to create the same kind of political juggernaut for his party that Bill Brock put together at the Republican National Committee, providing it with advanced technology and sophisticated resources for fundraising, candidate recruitment and training, and propaganda. Directors and organizers of Democratic think tanks say they are consciously copying the conservative American Enterprise Institute and Heritage Foundation. And the PACs are being formed, of course, to counter the influence of the corporate and new right political action committees that helped Republican candidates outspend the Democrats five or six to one in 1980.

Among Democratic PACs, two are relatively far along in the planning stage. One is Democrats for the

'80s, being organized by Mrs. Averell Harriman and Washington lawyer Harry McPherson to help centrist congressional candidates. The other is the unnamed finance arm of George McGovern's new organization, Americans for Common Sense, founded to organize grassroots organizations to outflank the new right. McGovern's main concern is to equip local citizens with information they can use to ensure that candidates, talk-show guests, and officeholders have to answer questions about inflation, energy, and foreign policy, not just about abortion, school prayer, and the Panama Canal, the agenda of the right. McGovern also wants to raise enough money to assist liberal candidates threatened by the right.

Yet another anti-right effort is called People for the American Way, organized by entertainment mogul Norman Lear to buy television ads promoting "pluralism and diversity" and to counter attempts by the religious right to ban schoolbooks and impose school prayer. The organization has just hired political professional Tony Podesta as executive director, however, suggesting it will soon expand into other organizing efforts.

The Lear and McGovern groups suggest that liberals finally have learned it's important not to cede symbols to the opposition. Common sense and the American way (along with patriotism and the flag) don't belong to the right. One other recently formed group has the same idea: the Committee for National Security, established by former arms control negotiator Paul Warnke as a counter to the anti-detente Committee on the Present Danger.

IN THE FUTURE, it seems likely that there will be less fighting in the Democratic party over procedure, although ultimately there may be more over policy. Across much of the liberal spectrum, a consensus has developed that the "new politics" reforms of the 1970s need to be re-reformed, at least to the extent of restoring participation by party officials and elected officeholders in the presidential nominating process. Last summer a Carter-dominated Democratic convention rules committee voted down a proposal by former DNC executive director Mark A. Siegel to reserve up to 25 percent of convention delegate seats for party chairmen, governors, senators, mayors, and representatives. Nowadays there is quibbling in the party only over the percentages.

But the old ideological wars are far from over, even though the balance of power in the Democratic party seems to have shifted rightward. This development parallels the general drift of the country. It also results from a widespread (though hardly universal) conviction that the 1980 election was a decisive repudiation of liberalism. A third reason for the shift is the arrival in force of organized labor, which may be left-socialist in England but is more conservative in America, especially on foreign policy. AFL-CIO president Lane Kirkland has abandoned George Meany's pattern of re-

From the Editor-in-Chief

With this issue Robert A. Cohen becomes publisher of *The New Republic*. Cohen came to *TNR* 18 months ago from *Sports Illustrated*, where he had been circulation manager. As of this writing the financial condition of this magazine has not yet approached that of Time, Inc., his former employer. But largely due to Cohen's efforts *TNR* now functions the way a serious business should.

Also starting with this issue, the staff listing includes the name of Marc Granetz as editor of New Republic Books, which is a joint trade book publishing venture with Holt, Rinehart & Winston. Granetz will also serve as a member of the magazine's editorial board.

On a more personal note: you may have noticed last week that after four years Michael Kinsley has put down his responsibilities, taken up first as managing editor and then as editor, for seeing to the quality and content of *TNR*. For almost a year he had wanted to do full-time writing. I argued, delayed, humored, and cajoled, confident in my belief that he'd relent and stay just where he has been, in the office to my left and at the receiving end of phone calls late at night and early in the morning, especially Sunday morning. I have run out of tricks to keep him. The truth is that I hadn't counted on someone quite so immune to matters of status and authority that he'd cheerfully go down the hall and down the staff listing. I do not know a better editor than Kinsley. But then I don't know a better writer either. So that's what I hope he'll be at *TNR*, for a long time to come.—M.P.

maintaining aloof from party affairs and pre-nomination politics. Instead, labor will endorse primary candidates, give money to the party, and, presumably, expect influence in return. Kirkland is a longstanding ally of the neoconservative Coalition for a Democratic Majority and the Moynihan-Jackson wing of the party, and their influences, too, should increase. Some Democrats may have feared (others hoped) that CDM would trickle away into the Republican party this year, following appointment of some of its members to jobs in the Reagan administration. But CDM officers say they are in the Democratic party to stay.

It remains unclear how much the Democratic party will speak with a single voice on issues. Manatt plans to reinstitute official issues councils that will make statements on Reagan policies and Democratic alternatives. Manatt also hopes to help officeholders and interest groups reach some consensus on their policy positions. However, most of the talking will be done outside the party by congressional leaders and prospective presidential contenders, of which there are close to a dozen.

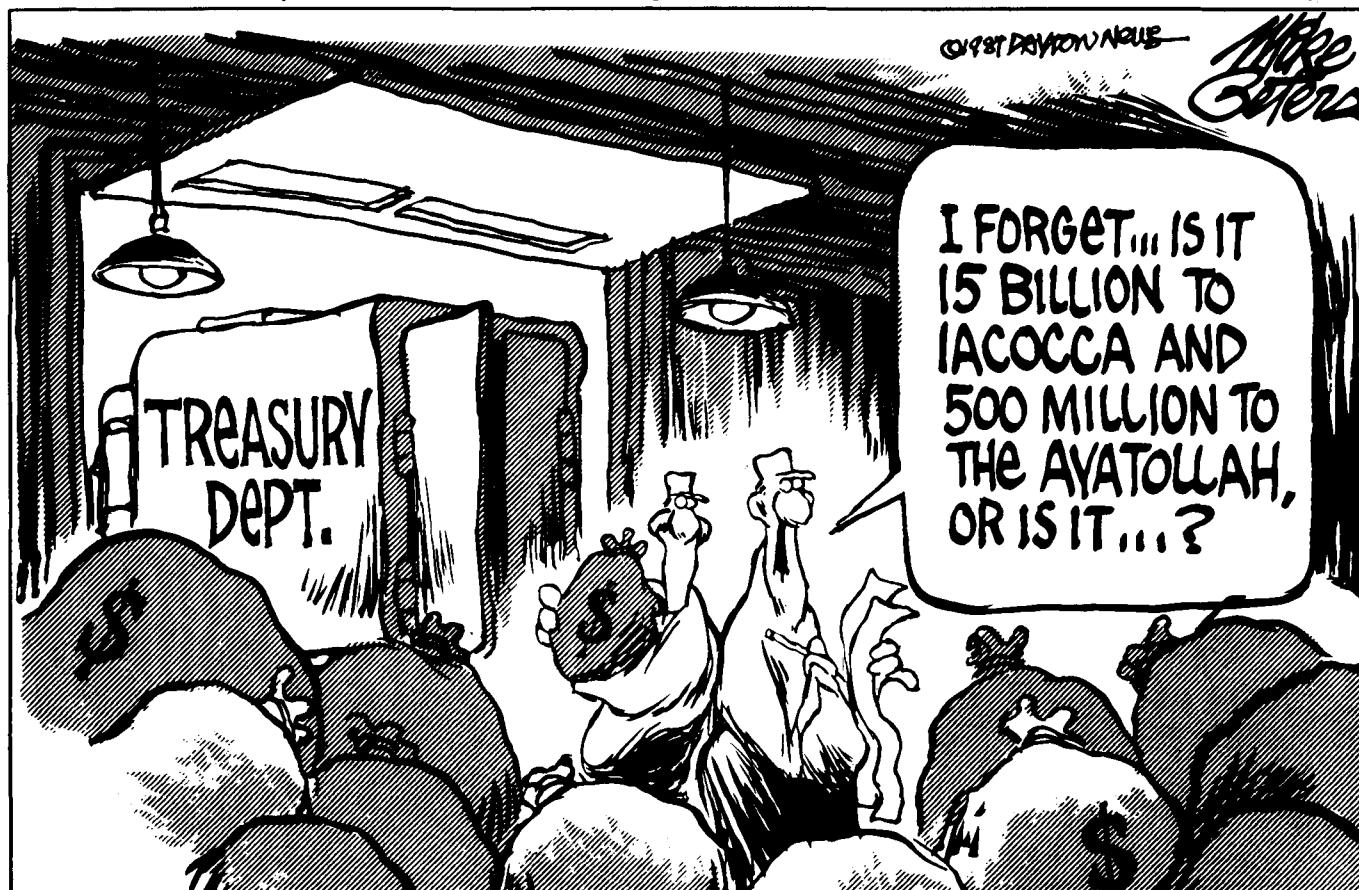
What Democrats think and say is likely to be influenced, too, by the new think tanks and some old ones which are expanding. The first new arrival is the Democratic Policy Institute, which has ambitions of becoming a Democratic AEI or, as one organizer put it, a "noisy Brookings." Major figures in the group include Ted VanDyk, a former aide to Hubert Humphrey and George McGovern; former officeholders such as Adam Yarmolinsky, Paul Warnke, and Hodding

Carter; and key officers of the old Democratic Forum organization, including Representative Michael Barnes of Maryland, Keith Haller, and Washington attorney Lanny Davis.

It is not clear even to the organizers exactly what positions DPI will take on key issues. As centrist liberals, they tend to be polite and moderate, but confused about what ought to be done in both economics and foreign policy. They believe in government but want to curb excessive regulation. They want a productive economy but also a compassionate one. Internationally, they want to be friends with everybody but also worry about US vulnerabilities. How to reconcile all this requires a think tank, and a good one.

It's been suggested that there may be some think-tankish role for CDM to the right of DPI, possibly in issue-development for the labor movement. To the left, planning for a "Democracy Project" is under way by Mark Green, a defeated New York congressional candidate and a former associate of Ralph Nader. If he can find the funding, Green would like to establish a think tank and a PAC to help progressive candidates.

Somewhat in the same ideological area is Gar Alperovitz's Center for Economic Alternatives, which is discussing a major expansion into organizing and activism to spread its case for government planning of the national economy and greater worker control of individual enterprises. Of all the new think tank activity, Alperovitz's may be the best financed. His budget currently is one million dollars and would rise to between two million and four million dollars within four years



drawing by Mike Peters

with normal growth. It may go to \$10 million, however, if the currently contemplated expansion takes place.

Also on the left, the Institute for Policy Studies is expanding its organizing activities both in local areas and by establishing a Washington political salon, the Progressive Club.

What's going to come of all this organizing and revitalizing among liberals nobody can say. There are sure to be fights between free marketeers and government planners, between foreign policy interventionists and sympathizers with third world revolutionaries, between detentists and hardline anti-Soviets. But the out-of-power times are when parties are supposed to rethink what they stand for. Sometimes they can't, and die. Sometimes they come back to power.

Morton Kondracke

A Fool and His Money Tool Up for the 1980s



If the Reagan administration is going to be so good for business, how can we liberals cash in on it? Out of power and without influence, we need money for solace.

It will be weeks before we have a precise idea of what the Reagan administration wants and what Congress will give it. The one thing that's certain is that gun production is going up. The additional amounts to be spent will be stupendous, but it's a trifle early to know the pattern of that spending.

If the administration is going to revert to an early 20th-century cannon-fodder army, then we ought to look at the textile manufacturers who weave the drab olive twill; or if it's a rockets-for-Russia approach, then we should be sniffing around the aerospace stocks and hope we can spend the profits before we are engulfed by the ultimate mushroom. Will the Dow-Jones hit 1,500 before an atomic bomb vaporizes Wall Street?

In any event there should be enough in the civilian economy to occupy us until we have a clearer understanding of where that additional \$20 billion in war preparedness is to be spent. What is likely to happen in the short run if the administration more or less gets what it wants?

Underlying the White House's supply-side approach is a metaphysical proposition, a theological axiom

about the nature of capitalist society, which presumes that, if left to its own devices, the economy will provide one job for each job seeker. It is also axiomatic in supply-side metaphysics that year by year each job will pay more, so that each of us will live better, provided the government keeps its taxes down and its paws off.

No evidence exists to support these articles of faith, but neither is there any evidence to support belief in the Second Coming, a fact that has never fazed the Seventh Day Adventists. While the millenarians look expectantly toward the heavens, the supply-siders just as confidently watch big government recede like Noah's flood in the expectation that a society freed from unnatural federal bondage will automatically rise to a high level of prosperity.

Their beatific visions are based on the belief that, by cutting taxes and public expenditure, the billions emancipated into the private sector will be invested in new plants and equipment, which will result in "higher productivity." So they may, so they may, but be careful about investing your money on the basis of supply-side theology. The premises are wobbly or sometimes mistaken. For instance, the much publicized "capital shortfall" (lack of dough for reinvestment) is at least questionable. Accurate calculations are hard to make but the numbers we do have indicate that our rate of reinvestment is as high as or higher than other technically advanced democracies. Corporate savings (money left over in the company treasury for new machinery, etc.) are larger now than in the Eisenhower era. Investment as a percentage of that tasteless theoretical entity, the Gross National Product (which is the sum of the money we charge for all we make and do), has scarcely changed in a quarter of a century. Thus the evidence for a money-starved economy that will boom when doused with new funds is highly iffy, so don't be running out and buying stocks in the leisure industry quite yet.

Moreover, it's anybody's guess what a further cut in business tax rates will result in. For a number of businesses the actual rates paid are so low now that another cut may not be a stimulus to risk-taking and entrepreneurial valor. We don't know, any more than we know if these extra bucks are going to be spent in modernizing faltering old-line industry or in ways that will do nothing to juice up productivity. Look at what National Steel did in that famously decrepit industry—went out and spent almost a quarter of a billion bucks to buy United Financial, a California-based savings and loan association.

Just as liberals learned that throwing money at a problem may not solve it, conservatives may discover the same holds true with the economy. There are structural obstacles that make filling the cornucopia a difficult and controversial task. In any event there is a long lead time before this manumitted money can be converted into wealth for you and me, assuming of course that productivity and modernizing gains aren't canceled out by war production. Cannons are a much

—Nick's Picks . . . Bart's Charts—

Things have quieted down considerably in our mythical investment fund this month. This is partially due to the fact that our portfolio is so diversified that it is reflecting the quietude of the real world: the stock market has not seen much movement, interest rates have settled down, and the first weeks of the Reagan administration have brought more talk than action. The financial world has adopted a wait-and-see attitude. Our hypothetical fund's relative doldrums also result from the absence of our volatile pork bellies contracts, which we sold last month. If we had held on to them for one more month (we would have had to sell them now in any event since the contracts come due in March) we would be about \$100,000 richer today. Lest we be too hard on ourselves it should also be noted that if we had tried to salvage our investment in cattle futures by putting up an additional \$100,000, we would have been out an additional \$100,000. Of course, if we could really predict such things we wouldn't be writing hypothetical columns.

Our biggest mover this month was Nucor. Unfortunately it was moving in the wrong direction, losing more than five points a share for a loss of more than \$8,000. Still, Nucor is the only investment we currently have (not including our money market fund) that is worth more than what we paid for it. The only investment to show a gain for the month was our Chrysler Financial Corporation bonds.

The interest rate we earn in Dreyfus Liquid Assets appears to have peaked, averaging 16.9 percent for the month compared to 16.2 percent one month ago. As its current yield is also 16.9 percent it should not increase any further unless the prime rate takes an unexpected turn upward. Four of our investments have paid us interest or dividends since the last round, adding nicely to our money market fund. We collected interest from Beatrice Foods (\$5,057) and Resorts International (\$7,000), and dividends from MONY (\$2,588) and Nucor (\$180). With

our interest from Dreyfus (\$2,858) this gives us \$296,172 to begin round eight.

Since this hypothetical exercise doesn't allow us to "wait until the price comes down and pounce" on von Hoffman's recommendations we will have to bypass auto replacement parts and construction materials since their prices are, for now, far beyond von Hoffman's suggested buying price. We will go with Citicorp this month, which at \$22½ is not too far above what we want to be paying. We will buy 4,500 shares for \$99,563 with \$996 (one percent) going to our broker as commission.

After 33 weeks our portfolio looks like this:

	January 20	February 10
93 Beatrice Foods bonds	\$ 77,423	\$ 75,795
156 Chrysler Financial Corp. bonds	78,195	82,680
140 Resorts International bonds	87,500	86,800
11,250 shares MONY Mortgage	88,594	84,375
1,640 shares Nucor	120,335	111,930
11,778 shares Templeton Growth Fund	89,631	87,628
2,250 shares Gulf Oil	90,563	87,188
95 fresh broiler futures on margin	95,000	92,150
4,500 shares Citicorp		99,563
Dreyfus Liquid Assets	278,489	195,613
TOTAL	\$1,005,730	\$1,003,722

The score so far (since June 20, 1980):

Consumer Price Index (estimated)	+ 6.1 percent
Dow Jones Industrial Average	+ 8.5 percent
TNR's Fool Fund	+ 0.4 percent

Bart Rubenstein

Bart Rubenstein is general manager of Channels magazine, which will begin publication in April.

heavier drag on the economy than food stamps or even the overpaid, insolently lazy clerk in the post office or the motor vehicle bureau.

(A parenthetical word on productivity which the supply-siders are forever saying is down, lagging, falling behind, and/or sinking. It may be doing all those bad things, but productivity—the amount of labor needed to make or provide a given item or service—is an extraordinarily slippery thing to measure. It is fairly simple to figure out how many person hours are needed to make one ton of pig iron, but how do you measure the productivity of the female operative in a massage parlor? By the number of orgasms she is able to induce per hour? There are only about four million more workers now in farming, manufacturing, building, mining, transportation, and public utilities than there were 30 years ago. The volume of their output is far larger, even if it may lag behind foreign competitors in certain select industries. Hence some statements about the imperative to "reindustrialize" America are misleading oversimplifications.)

To your Fool's way of thinking, the short-term

effect of Reagan's policies will not put more money in people's pockets. Wages won't rise faster than prices, unemployment may well edge upward as a result of the dislocations in government spending (we don't know yet if he's really going to cut total expenditures or merely shift them from the civilian to the military side), and then there is the final depressant on buying: the rising price of oil. If they mean what they say at the White House, then the Federal Reserve Board will not print money to pay for fuel increases so there will be less money for frills like food and psychiatric care. (Incidentally, you may cancel predictions made here earlier about a gasoline shortage this spring. At these prices, demand should drop faster than supply.)

Ergo, an investor might want to look at some stocks that have been regarded as almost pure canine quality stuff, but do remember, every dog has its day. If people are going to have less money, they are going to try to make do with their present automobile so the automobile replacement parts business deserves a look-see.

This is not an industry that analysts are wild about, but a company like Snap-On Tool has anything but the

look of a bow-wow about it. It has a long record of profitability from selling tools and such to automobile mechanics. The problem is that it doesn't look like its stock is going to appreciate, so if you do buy it, get it at the low range of its recent up-down fluctuations, which is roughly between 18 and 28 bucks a share.

Thanks to gas prices, automobile driving is down. This means less wear and tear, but the indications are that there was a lot of deferred car maintenance last year, so the Fool recommends studying the fortunes of Genuine Auto Parts, one of those companies that just keeps increasing sales through boom and bust. The technological changes in the industry demand that replacement parts companies invest substantial sums, but Genuine is virtually debt-free and appears to be getting ready to serve the markets of the future.

A different breed of dog is the construction material business. The whole industry looks like wilted lettuce but there may be openings for gamblers and opportunists. As more people discover their house isn't worth the fabulous sums everybody told them it was, they may decide to keep it and fix it up. With the costs of home ownership and even rentals exceeding many people's price range, look for parents to subdivide older, larger, fuel-consuming empty nests. This will bring brighter prospects to firms in the retail building supply business. Wickes companies fits that description, but its profits have been slimmer than deli sliced roast beef of late, so don't pay a dime over \$11 a share for it. Another possibility is Color Tile, Inc., which operates over 400 stores selling do-it-yourself materials. Again, though, the Fool would be leery of buying at much more than \$14. On some of these stocks, you must wait and watch till the price comes down, and then pounce.

There are countless regional retail chains catering to the homeowner. Check out the ones in your own area that appear to be aggressive and successful merchandisers. Their stock may be traded in your locale and a couple of them could be a good deal.

If Reagan gets nothing else done he should be able to drive down interest rates. He may do it, *per accidens*, via a recession or through lowering the inflation rate by sticking to a hard money policy. But regardless of why the rate goes down, the downward drop is good news for the banking business. If banks can start getting money by paying 10 percent when they have a lot of 20 percent loans outstanding, they're going to rake in profits. Be careful, though. The banking industry is in the throes of epochal change. If you're buying stock to hold on to for a while, be sure to go for a big, smart bank that can handle both the technological changes that will bring about the end of the old paper check and the organizational and merchandising ones inherent in the coming of national branch banking.

The folks at Citicorp are your basic greedy guts, capitalistic stinkers, but they are very adept, inventive, and energetic stinkers, just the kind you want. The Fool definitely recommends the stock, especially if you

grab it when it floats down in the high teens. (It won't get any cheaper than that.) If Citicorp is too much for a liberal to think of buying into, there are less notorious institutions which should make you about the same amount of money. Try the Republic National Bank of Dallas (Republic of Texas Corporation) or if you're prejudiced against new money, you could do worse than First Bank System, Inc., of Minneapolis.

In parting, remember that limousine liberals have more fun than poor ones.

Nicholas von Hoffman

Nicholas von Hoffman is a syndicated columnist.

How we allowed Soviet cheating on SALT to go undetected.

Deciphering the Russians

The United States appears to be without an adequate technical intelligence capability for monitoring the tests of new Soviet nuclear missiles, a perilous state of affairs that may not be fully remedied until 1983. This inadequacy has three sources: the loss in 1979 of crucial monitoring stations in Iran that provided basic coverage of testing grounds in nearby Soviet Asia; inexplicable delays in deploying new-generation satellite observation systems by the United States; and Soviet concealment of the character of the tests through the latest techniques of "encrypting" (coding) radio signals transmitted by the missiles. There is general agreement among a majority of experts in the defense and intelligence communities that for all the above reasons the United States lags behind in its monitoring efforts.

The upgrading of American intelligence monitoring capability and the increasingly serious question of Soviet encrypting of missiles' tests may constitute fundamental problems for the Reagan administration to solve before embarking on SALT negotiations with Moscow. Reagan may have had encrypting in mind when he spoke of Soviet "cheating," and he may act soon to challenge the Soviets about reports of at least 30 Soviet violations of SALT II.

Our ability to observe and interpret Soviet missile tests extends beyond the confines of SALT treaties. Both SALT I and SALT II (the latter signed by former president Carter and Soviet president Brezhnev in June 1979, but never submitted for Senate ratification here) provide that "each party undertakes not to interfere with the . . . means of verification of the other party." In monitoring Soviet missile flight tests, the most important means of verification are telemetry

measurements. Telemetry measurements are readings of radio signals transmitted by a missile, starting before launch and continuing during the entire trajectory, reporting on every aspect of its performance up to the separation of MIRV warheads from the projectile. United States intelligence is keen on intercepting these telemetry signals to learn important details about the tests. These data tell the United States much of what it needs to know about Soviet compliance with SALT limitations on testing and subsequent deployment of nuclear weapons, as well as about what the Russians are doing in missilery not covered by SALT.

Though the SALT treaties ban either side's interference with verification, including encryption, they allow encryption in tests of weapons whose development does not come under the SALT ceilings. In the judgment of such serious critics of SALT II as Ohio's Democratic senator John Glenn, this freedom to encrypt telemetry in tests outside the treaty constitutes the agreement's worst flaw, because it allows the Russians to test all forms of new strategic technology. SALT II is no longer an immediate issue inasmuch as President Reagan has indicated that the 1979 text must be renegotiated, but the overall telemetry problem now plagues United States intelligence in an extraordinary fashion.

FOR NEARLY a quarter of a century, the Soviet Union has been launching intercontinental ballistic missiles, as well as other space vehicles, from two Central Asian testing centers. One is Tyuratam on the Syr Darya River, northeast of the Sea of Aral, and the other is Plesetsk, between the Caspian and Aral seas, northwest of the city of Bukhara. Over the years the United States has been able to monitor tests at Tyuratam and Plesetsk from satellites and from two telemetry stations operated in northern Iran. The Iranian sites were close to the Soviet border. Their highly sensitive directional antennae could read Soviet telemetry signals from Tyuratam and Plesetsk along a line of sight, assuring excellent reception. The two stations taped Soviet missile telemetry around the clock, and data thus obtained were analyzed with satellite photography and information obtained from satellite heat and other sensors. This arrangement provided the United States with at least 60 percent of the knowledge it required about Soviet missile tests.

But soon problems began to emerge. In 1977, the fifth year of SALT I, United States intelligence learned that the Soviets had shifted to new telemetry systems, which rendered monitoring more difficult. The Carter administration, which had just assumed office, decided to design new United States satellite monitors and to adapt existing ones to the new conditions. This was when the drama began.

To start production on the new technology (which was already available) an initial outlay of \$185 million, a pittance in terms of technical intelligence expenditures, was proposed for the fiscal year 1978 budget. It

was estimated that deployment of the new technology would take four to five years. For reasons that remain unclear, however, the Office of Management and Budget eliminated these funds from the new budget. Explanations for this decision vary. Some officials say that with the availability of the tracking stations in Iran—and it had not occurred to anybody in 1977 that they might be in jeopardy some day—there was no undue urgency to proceed. Others claim that “trade-offs” of a budgetary and political nature were involved. Funds for CHALET (as the new technology was called) were incorporated, however, in the following fiscal year's budget. At least a year was thus lost, although officials insist that this “slippage” did not make that much difference. Other experts disagree. In any event, a delay did develop.

MEANWHILE the shah had left Iran in January 1979, and the two monitoring stations stopped operating after the fall of the military regime on February 10. To make matters worse, the Soviets began to encrypt missile telemetry to an unprecedented degree during 1979. Some experts think that they were taking advantage of SALT II's “Second Common Understanding,” permitting encryption of missile tests not covered by the treaty (although the United States Senate had not ratified SALT II, the two governments had agreed to act as if the treaty were fully in force) and of the fact that the United States no longer had the Iranian sites. Given the loss of the United States's monitoring capability, Washington is faced with uncertainty about the extent of the Soviet Union's concealment and deception practices.

To compensate, the United States embarked on a crash program of filling its intelligence gaps. Admiral Stansfield Turner, the director of the CIA, was reported to have admitted in an executive session before a Senate committee that it would take the United States four years to make up for the loss of the Iran stations, presumably referring to the time needed to deploy CHALET. Current estimates are that CHALET will be operational in 1983, suggesting that the United States will have suffered a four-year gap (1979 to 1983) in adequate monitoring. But Harold Brown stated that only one year would be required to make up for the Iranian sites, emphasizing that surveillance was being exercised from unnamed ground stations, ships, and aircraft flying in international air space.

Many intelligence officers find these claims unconvincing. Although the five NSA stations in Turkey, originally designed to monitor medium-range missile tests at the Kapustin Yar in the central Soviet Union (mainly the SS-20 and SS-21 missiles), have acquired a certain strategic capability, they cannot match the lost Iranian stations. Other attempts were made to upgrade American intelligence after the Iranian revolution: a high-technology station was installed in Norway, quite a distance from Central Asia, and mobile stations are said to have been emplaced at unidentified loca-

tions. A plan to erect a monitoring post in Pakistan failed for political reasons.

Very little has been said publicly about the United States's monitoring capabilities since the 1979 SALT debates on verification. Intelligence and defense officials insist, however, that not nearly enough has been achieved to improve these capabilities in the intervening period. SALT II allowed each side to develop one new ICBM system, but intelligence experts think that the Soviet Union may be at work on four or five systems, including a medium-size solid-fuel ICBM that may have already been tested at Plesetsk. Without the Iranian stations and with the CHALET satellite system not yet operational, American intelligence has difficulty in measuring telemetry from the Soviet missiles during the crucial pre-launch "burn" period of 12 seconds or so, data that normally would establish such things as the type of fuel and the throw-weight, and thereby indicate whether a new ICBM is on line.

In the meantime, the United States is turning toward encrypting its own missile tests, a practice it had scrupulously avoided since the signing of SALT I. The Soviets do most of their telemetry monitoring from vessels on station in international waters off Cape Canaveral, Florida, and Santa Maria, California, and the judgment in Washington is that their work must not be made too easy. The other thing, as Senator Goldwater suggested earlier this year, is to "increase investment in new technologies" now that money may no longer be a restraint in the making of defense and intelligence budgets. But it does seem a shame that the United States could not have come up with the \$185 million four years ago. For want of a nail. . . .

Tad Szulc

Will the new conservative political economy work?

Marching to Dunkirk

The debate over economic policy within the Reagan administration is haunted by two specters. The first is Thatcherism, which warns that trying to halt inflation by inducing unemployment is counterproductive and politically suicidal. The importance of avoiding Thatcherism and the subsequent "erosion of our capacity to govern successfully and revive the economy before November, 1982" is the main message of last month's famous memorandum to Reagan by Representative Jack Kemp and Budget Director David Stockman raising the possibility of an "economic Dunkirk."

The second specter is the ghost of Jimmy Carter, which reminds the new administration that watered

down austerity policies do not work either. Politically unable to risk Thatcherite levels of employment, and unwilling to defy conservative opposition to wage-price controls, Carter and his advisers tried to slip past the election with a patchwork compromise of gestures and half policies. It cost him the presidency.

According to Stockman and Kemp the only way to escape the horrors of both Thatcherism and Carterism and still preserve conservative principles is through quick stimulation of economic growth. They argue that a sharp jump in joblessness is politically unacceptable to a party still stained with responsibility for the Great Depression. More important, they are also telling Republicans that austerity cannot cure inflation. Unemployment, by generating more "soup line" social welfare spending and less tax revenue, increases the federal deficit. In their view, this will make inflation worse. Their emphasis that our current deficits are caused primarily by lack of economic growth—rather than simply by "waste in government"—marks a major break with traditional conservative analysis. Stockman and Kemp are willing to give up trying to balance the budget in the short run and to bet that the growth generated by an immediate large tax cut will stimulate enough taxable economic activity to balance the budget before the next presidential election.

Traditional conservatives like Arthur Burns and Herbert Stein disagree, arguing that Thatcherism is the only way. Stein, chairman of the Council of Economic Advisors under both Nixon and Ford, answering Stockman and Kemp in *Fortune*, insists that demand must be squeezed out of the economy by cutting the deficit now, and that higher unemployment is a "predictable by-product" of this process. The new president's task, Stein says, is to stand firm and above all to stop promising that unemployment will not increase.

The specific neoconservative policy proposals are an odd mixture of conventional conservative tax breaks for business and upper-income classes, and conventional liberal deficit spending to maintain demand. The key is the latter. Although they take pains to deny any affiliation, like good Keynesians Stockman and Kemp give a high priority to deficit spending. Like good conservatives, they want to generate growth through the private sector—by cutting taxes rather than through public outlays. Professor Galbraith once labeled a similar mix "Reactionary Keynesianism." The neoconservatives are still avid budget cutters. But to promote growth, they would immediately cut taxes faster than they cut spending. Stockman and Kemp argue that "dilution of the tax cut program to limit short run static revenue losses would be counterproductive."

There is no mystery among economists about how to stimulate economic growth: spend money. But the inflationary bias in an economy where spending pushes up prices faster than it reduces unemployment paralyzed the Carter administration—so much that it abandoned the traditional Democratic tool of deficit spending to generate jobs in favor of a halfway policy



drawing by Vint Lawrence

of Republican austerity. How then do the reactionary Keynesians propose to deal with inflation, the problem that frustrated the conventional Keynesians?

Here their proposition gets murky. Stockman and Kemp hope to end long-term inflation in two ways. First, "supply-side" theory presumes a tremendous explosion in supply because people will work harder and take more investment risks in response to lower tax rates. There is very little empirical evidence to support this claim. Neoconservatives like to point out that their assumption makes common sense: people work harder if rewards go up. But in an America dedicated to leisure and the good life, people are just as likely to take their rewards in more leisure and less risk. The evidence falls both ways—cut taxes and some people work harder and take more risks, some people work less and take fewer risks, and some people do not change their behavior at all. Even if tax incentives worked marvelously, they offer no serious answer to inflation. Not even their most ardent boosters are confident they will achieve productivity improvements of more than one percent over the decade—and inflation is now in the 12 to 13 percent range. Stein insists that there is "no conceivable increase in the growth of output" that can solve the inflation problem.

A second Stockman/Kemp theory about inflation involves investor psychology. They argue that if investors expect inflation will come down, it will in fact

come down. For example, a major cause of high interest rates is that uncertainty about future inflation has dried up a lot of long-term investment capital. Businesses increasingly have had to borrow in the short-term market, driving those interest rates upward. If investors believed inflation likely to fall, long-term capital would once more flow and interest rates would come down. Since the budget cannot be balanced in the near term, the key is to show firm intention that it will be balanced in the future.

The Republicans apparently will concentrate their political capital on trying to reduce spending in the long run, including some social welfare entitlement programs and costly capital projects like highways and mass transit. A commitment to dismantle business regulation and an accord with the Federal Reserve to protect the Fed's efforts to restrict expansion of the money supply from short-term economic pressures complete the set of promises aimed at restoring business confidence. Such a package, it is held, will inspire investors to provide long-term capital once more, spurring economic growth and the new tax revenues that are central to the argument that future budgets will actually come into balance. It will work, the theory goes, because people will believe it will work. Again, hard evidence is scarce. Irving Kristol, delineating supply-side economics for the readers of the *Wall Street Journal*, lamely explains, "the interactions are so subtle,

the feedbacks so complex, that we do not have any econometric model capable of handling them."

The fundamental difficulty with neoconservative theory is that our current inflation was not started by a sudden shift in bond brokers' "expectations." Nor are government deficits to blame. Other industrial nations run much higher deficits with lower rates of inflation and unemployment. Balancing the budget has only a small effect on the Consumer Price Index: the Congressional Budget Office calculates that cutting 20 billion dollars from the budget will bring down inflation by less than one half of one percent. Since 1972, inflation has been generated primarily by sudden jumps in the price of oil and food which have periodically kicked off a price-wage spiral, raising material and labor costs throughout the economy, and undermining investor confidence in the future. This dynamic has been aggravated by the self-defeating response of the Federal Reserve Board, which alternately tries to accommodate the new demand for credit to avoid recession, and cuts it short to avoid inflation. This further contributes to higher price levels by reducing the supply of new housing and by inhibiting investment in new productivity-enhancing equipment. To be sure, a policy of running massive government surpluses or a severe tightening of the money supply could reduce inflation, but only by risking depression—which is precisely what the neoconservatives are trying to avoid.

IN FACT, Stockman and Kemp offer no solution to the fundamental sources of inflation wracking the economy. They have nothing to say about expected food price increases in the 10 to 15 percent range for 1981, and new crude oil price jolts which are likely to raise the cost of oil to 50 dollars a barrel by spring. Faced with the prospect of continuing high prices, skeptical investors may not be reassured by presidential promises of a budget balanced by 1983 or 1984. Moreover, the Stockman/Kemp proposals will add to inflation. First, they urge speeding up deregulation of oil and possibly natural gas prices. Second, an accord which permits the Federal Reserve Board to concentrate exclusively on slowing the growth of money and credit and stabilizing the dollar will ensure high and volatile interest rates, increasing investor uncertainty and raising capital costs. Higher military spending and tax stimulation of the economy will add to further inflationary pressures in those sectors and regions of the economy where markets are tight, while leaving idle capacity elsewhere. In an attempt to avoid Thatcherism while remaining true to conservative premises, Stockman and Kemp end up whipping their horses in different directions—toward expansion on the one hand, and austerity on the other. The difficulties of getting where you want to go under such circumstances are well known; the result could be a repeat of Carter's performance.

Nevertheless the Stockman/Kemp strategy is prob-

ably the Republicans' best hope—Thatcherism and Carterism are dead ends. The only other alternative is to move left. Stockman and Kemp know that if they fail, the pressures for expanding public intervention in the economy will be irresistible. Irving Kristol concludes his defense of the neoconservative position thus:

A skeptic might inquire: What if this new conservative political economy doesn't work. To which one can only reply: It had better work. It is the last, best hope of democratic capitalism in America, and if it fails—well, then conservatives can concentrate on nostalgic poetry and forget all about political economy. Someone else will be in charge of that.

Traditional conservatives have similar fears. Citing the lessons of the Nixon years, Stein warns that if Republicans weaken, if they succumb to cries of economic pain and flinch at the necessity of a severe recession, a renewal of wage-price controls—and the further discrediting of free market theories—is all but inevitable.

THE REPUBLICAN debate is slowly closing off the comfortable avenues of escape from our economic dilemma. If neither the massive deflation of Thatcherism, nor the stumble-through halfway measures of Carterism, nor the supply-side theorizing of Stockman/Kemp offer real hope, where will this leave us?

It will leave us with nowhere to go but toward controls. The people of the United States now hold their government responsible for assuring jobs and stable prices. No administration will stay in power that does not use its authority to stop the economic pain as Richard Nixon did and Jimmy Carter did not. A general freeze must be followed by selective wage-price controls which, unlike Nixon's, pay specific attention to eliminating bottlenecks and to reducing the extraordinary instability in the key sectors. This requires above all reconrol of energy prices coupled with expanded conservation programs, much larger grain reserves, and the management of grain exports to assure more stability in the domestic food sector. We also need a combination of credit allocation and tax policies to stabilize and expand the supply of housing—where shortages in many areas are a major contributor to inflation.

Beyond this, we must face the need for a comprehensive incomes policy; the increase in total claims on the nation's output over the long run must be limited to productivity gains. This obviously requires a reconstituted social consensus, which cannot be achieved unless the instability and uncertainty brought about by inflation are ended. That is why freezing the wage-price spiral and stabilizing prices in the key sectors—particularly those involving life's basic necessities—are so important. It allows us to build a framework for the planning of a balanced, non-inflationary full employment economy.

It is improbable that the Reagan administration will lead us down this progressive road. If it is forced to choose controls, they are likely to be in the cynical mode of the Nixon years when they were used to "zap" labor, and temporarily cap the economic system for the 1972 election with no thought to longer-term structural solutions. So, as Kristol suggests, it will be up to "someone else."

The Republicans profitably used their years out of office to debate fundamental economic issues. Those who would like to be in charge once again would be

wise to reflect upon the lessons of the recent past. There is probably no way to avoid Dunkirk; the issue is what do we do afterward.

**Gar Alperovitz
Jeff Faux**

*Gar Alperovitz and Jeff Faux are co-directors of the National Center for Economic Alternatives. Their book, *Rebuilding America*, will be published by Simon and Schuster next fall.*

Styles of self-criticism.

The Mea Culpa Generation

by Charles Krauthammer

He confessed everything, exaggerated everything. He admitted all blame with an empty heart. He was very submissive, fully and deeply recognizing faults, showing himself a repentant sinner. He had a lively face, lots of grimaces. He was a marvelous actor.

—Robert Jay Lifton

Thought Reform and the Psychology of Totalism

Camus once observed that "to achieve notoriety it is enough, after all, to kill one's concierge, but unhappily this is usually an ephemeral reputation, so many concierges are there who deserve and receive the knife." Camus was pessimistic about the possibility of fame on a mass scale. He might not have been had he lived to see the TV talk show, the instant autobiography, Barbara Walters, or any of the other confessional gadgetry of our age.

The 1970s (which began August 9, 1974, and ended January 20, 1981) are considered a period of introspection. They were also a period of self-revelatory chic. It became fashionable and profitable to parlay one's 15 minutes of fame into a ghost-written autobiography (c.f. Linda Lovelace). Radicals retreating from the barricades to the navel took refuge in hotel ballrooms for the therapeutic self-criticism of est. Jerry Rubin kept us constantly informed of his conversions from radicalism to feminism to stockbroker's capitalism. For the older set, Betty Ford set the pace. Her forthright admission of drug and alcohol addiction was so successful that it created a confessional epidemic. Joan Kennedy was quick to follow suit, and before long every aspiring starlet and harlot was frantically pulling

skeletons out of the closet and throwing them on the public stage. Addictions, obsessions, phobias, and depressions; perversions, diversions, even the occasional felony were churned out to meet the insatiable demand. Those who had spent a fortune baring their souls to Beverly Hills psychiatrists recouped their losses with a spread in *People* magazine. And those who a generation ago would have knelt and whispered furtively in the ears of a benign father confessor proudly "told it like it is" to that devout anti-Catholic, master of the autobiographical arts, television's Phil Donahue.

There is no crime against man or nature that Donahue will not explore, no dark recess of the soul that he will not flood with klieg lights. With its parade of cross-dressers, PCP-smokers, and child-beaters, his confessional theater would have made P.T. Barnum proud. But Donahue has outdone even Barnum. In the old days, one merely gawked at these unfortunates. Donahue's genius is to get them to talk. And they speak in the self-assured tones of the recently shriven. The flasher contritely explains his appearance on the show as a means of "working through" his problem, helping others, and warning those who might be tempted to follow in his path. But of course he is merely pulling the ultimate flash—lowering his psychic knickers to millions in one shot. What he says has the form of confession, but it is, in fact, a narcissistic celebration of what we've come to call his lifestyle.

Out of this mass of self-revelation has evolved a new and growing subspecies: the political confession. It is a form of political theater highly developed in the

communist world—where public confessions are unusually well rehearsed—but, until recently, greatly undervalued in this country. We've had our share of confessed political sinners, but the genre has never been so popular and so profitable as it is today. In fact it has become so specialized that it has spawned two distinct sub-types.

The first was perfected by the people who brought us Watergate. We think of Watergate as having created a new class of criminals, but it also gave us a new form of confession, the maximalist confession. Until that time (in the McCarthy era, for example) public disclosure of your errors and those of your friends was designed to get you off the hook. The Watergate confessions were designed to make you a star. The technique was to tell all and to embellish if need be. The lure was the book contract and the college lecture circuit. And the result was a clattering of jail-cell typewriters not heard since the heyday of the Moscow show trials. John Dean became a *Rolling Stone* correspondent and the subject of a TV movie. Halde- man and Ehrlichman became writers of note. Smaller fish had to be content with making the rounds of the talk shows, where, seated between Joyce Brothers and Erma Bombeck, they plied their trade as full-time penitents.

There was one problem with the maximalist confession. It could get you on the "Dinah Shore Show," but it couldn't get you back in the White House. The price of celebrityhood was to be barred from politics for life. Something better had to be found. Enter the minimalist confession.

WEST OF THE Elbe, the minimalist confession has traditionally held sway. Its purpose is to salvage the confessor's future. The technique is to admit as little as possible. Ted Kennedy's televised address to the people of Massachusetts after Chappaquiddick was in the classic minimalist tradition. Its hallmark was the forthright statement that he accepted full responsibility for his actions. Since that statement was empty of content and since the purpose of his confession was to enable him to carry on exactly as before, the acceptance of full responsibility was a hollow gesture. It reminded me of the lawyer in the *New Yorker* cartoon who says, "Your Honor, my client would like to plead responsibility but not guilt." The politician, on the other hand, pleads guilt but not responsibility. The misdeed carries no adverse consequences; the only real penalty is the humiliation of the confession itself.

Mastery of the minimalist confession has become essential in presidential campaigns. Here what must be atoned for is not a crime but a linguistic misdemeanor. The press hungrily casts about for a gaffe, and won't let go when it lands one. Jimmy Carter learned that lesson well in the 1976 campaign when he was almost destroyed by the "ethnic purity" remark. At first he tried to pass it off as a slip of the tongue or a meaning-

less idiosyncratic expression. But that brought only more criticism. Ethnic purity obliterated all other campaign news and left Carter politically defenseless until, in a ritualized ceremony of recantation and redemption, Martin Luther King Sr. gave him absolution on network television. Within days the issue was dead. In 1980 it happened to Carter again. In October, during the period of his recovery in the polls, he was accused of "meanness," a charge which monopolized campaign coverage for days. It became clear that the only way to stop the hemorrhage was to confess. He did the obvious. He sent for America's preeminent mother confessor, Barbara Walters, and on the first question of the interview pled guilty to the charge. His sentence was reduced to time served with Barbara and he was able to get on with his campaign. (In their campaigns Ed Muskie and Jerry Ford learned that crying in public and misplacing Poland are more serious political crimes since they do not lend themselves to confession. They are literally unpardonable.)

But the ultimate minimalist confession was created by one of the cleverest and most able members of Congress, the former president of the American Conservative Union, Robert Bauman. In the middle of his reelection campaign he was arrested for soliciting sex from a 16-year-old boy. Lesser men would have resigned and withdrawn. Better men might have joined a monastery. But Bauman would not knuckle under to such conventional thinking. After a week's regrouping he emerged flanked by family and minister to give a remarkable press conference. It is the classic text of the minimalist confession. First, it acknowledges not the act itself, but instead some character flaw ("homosexual tendencies"). Second, in the best Kennedy tradition, responsibility is accepted but the blame is placed elsewhere—this time on alcoholism. (This device is popular also with those who take bribes from FBI sheiks and who peddle influence for Libya.) Third, what is promised is not a change of heart but a new dose of therapy. Fourth, and most important, the confessor declares absolution for himself ("I've made peace with my God") and announces that from now on the subject is closed.

THIS TYPOLOGY of confessions enables us to understand the otherwise inexplicable Rita Jenrett. Ms. Jenrett, wife of one of the convicted Abscam congressmen, caused a stir and much confusion last year when she published "Diary of a Mad Congress-wife" in the *Washington Post*. Readers were puzzled because she had a reputation for standing by her husband and for never missing a chance to be photographed walking arm in arm with him to the courthouse. Yet this piece, which she claimed to be writing in his defense, was very damaging to him, with its tales of sexual and alcoholic indiscretions. What was she doing? She had simply realized that her husband's original minimalist defense—the confession based on alcohol that puts it all behind you—had failed, and

their careers in politics were finished. All that was left was show biz. And if she was ever to get her career as a singer off the ground, she had to deliver the maximalist celebrity confession. If the Watergate crowd could do it, why couldn't she? Why not. Watch for her on Donahue.

The art of confession has become such a standard part of the political repertoire that any refusal to play the game is met now with consternation. The most dramatic example occurred at the recent confirmation hearings for Alexander Haig. After days of trying and failing to uncover any Haig wrongdoing in Watergate, Senator Paul Tsongas said plaintively to General Haig: "On several occasions there has been an obvious way for you to say it was wrong, it will not happen again. But we don't get that. . . . We are almost beseeching you, for that reassurance, somehow like unrequited love. We are not getting reassurance. It is our one shot, and if we don't get it now, I don't know when we are going to get it." The senator's love went unrequited. "The kinds of *men culpae* . . . you want I just can't give because I don't feel that," said Haig. Frustrated but persistent, his suitors kept begging him for just one tiny, perfunctory confession of guilt. Haig refused. He could barely contain himself. "What is it you are after?" he demanded of Senator Paul Sarbanes, "something that you want me to say that you have been unable to get from somebody else?"

That somebody, of course, is Richard Nixon. What Tsongas and Sarbanes longed to hear was that final sorrowful "I done wrong" from the mouth of Richard Nixon. Despite an orgy of lower-level recantation and repentance, the hope for the consummate Watergate confession by the king himself had been frustrated by the Ford pardon. Not even David Frost's \$650,000 could buy it (although we were willing to pay that price just for the *chance* to hear Nixon say it). I think Haig was right. What the unrequited lovers knew they could never get from the master, they tried to get from the servant. And Haig infuriated them by spurning their affections.

Nixon and Haig may not have much appreciation for the Constitution or the notion of public trust, but they do appear to have a firm grasp of the nature and purpose of confession. Haig's assertion that where there is no wrongdoing and no guilt there should be no confession is self-evident. For confession to be real and not just a sham, it cannot be, as Tsongas implied it was, a one-shot deal. It must involve not only the admission of guilt for wrongdoing committed, but remorse and genuine resolution not to repeat (contrition), and willingness to accept the consequences of one's actions (penance). And there are public figures, like John Profumo and Eldridge Cleaver, who have taken confession seriously. Their fates are sad, perhaps, but they do have a touch of nobility. The fact that they, and not the real charlatans, are frequent objects of derision testifies to our current preference for counterfeit over real confession.

How do we account for this epidemic of confession? It is not just confined to politics and popular culture. Alfred Kazin says of contemporary literature: "There is so much confessional poetry and fiction, that I ask myself . . . what the spell is on all of us." His answer is that nowadays we have more to confess. "The open lust for political advantage over human rights and belief in our American superpowers have made breakdown and confession, Vietnam, Watergate, and investigation a part of our time."

KAZIN IS certainly right that we feel guiltier than we ever have (though one may reject his implication that we've earned it). But our appetite for confession signals something more—a need for reassurance that our values are indeed worth upholding. The example of the show trial is instructive.

The extraordinary lengths to which communist regimes have gone to produce public confessions is, on the face of it, puzzling. Surely, if their only function is to create scapegoats or public diversions, or to eliminate enemies, there are easier ways. Why the need for a bureaucracy of interrogators, torturers, and courtroom choreographers? As the trial of Xiang Jing reminds us, the real purpose of the show trial is to confer legitimacy on regimes that lack firm constitutional, religious, or historical sanction. There is little that can reinforce the prevailing values better than a parade of enemies-of-the-state turned penitent sinners, admitting their guilt in open court to open microphones and asking for just retribution. In 1952, when the verdict was read at the Slansky show trials in Prague, the gallery, which included many West European communist journalists, stood and cheered. One of those who parroted a scripted confession was Eugen Loebel, deputy foreign trade minister. When he was sentenced to life imprisonment his fellow workers at the ministry were moved to stage a protest. They demanded the death penalty.

Xiang Jing, no stranger to show trials herself, understood their function perfectly well. She knew that her trial had nothing to do with the return of legality to China. It was an instrument for conferring legitimacy on the new ruling group. By refusing to confess she denied that to her opponents and subverted the purpose of the trial.

In this country we don't torture people into show trial confessions. We just turn on the television lights and let the penitents wander onto the stage in search of fame or just plain political survival. And the market accommodates the confessor because the demand is high. More is at work here than the need for entertainment or exorcism. Vietnam, Watergate, and the decline of traditional values have placed much of what we used to believe in question. The spectacle of public repentance by corrupt public officials or exposed homosexuals is one of our sad, last ways of shoring up the old values. And it seems to matter little to us if the confession is worth no more than Eugen Loebel's.

The Liberal Promise of Prosperity

by Robert B. Reich

Any view of the proper role of government in the economy must, if it is to lay claim to ideological predominance in America, carry with it the promise of prosperity. In the quarter-century following World War II, liberalism did just that. Between the mid-1940s and the late 1960s liberalism successfully married the modern welfare state to principles of Keynesian demand-management of the economy. The spectacular performance of the American economy during that interval demonstrated that active government intervention was not just compatible with prosperity but essential to it. Social justice fit hand in glove with economic growth, because both depended upon strong, centralized bureaucracies to organize a substantial portion of the national economic product.

Since 1970 that liberal promise has been broken. Our economy is now in decline, largely because of America's worsening international competitive position. During the past decade nearly a million manufacturing jobs have been lost in the region stretching from the factories of Baltimore to the auto plants of St. Louis, and another million in the rest of the country. The share of the world market claimed by US manufactured goods has fallen by 23 percent. Thirty percent of our autos are now made abroad, compared to eight percent in 1970; 15 percent of our steel, compared to nine percent in 1970; over 50 percent of our consumer electronics products, compared to 10 percent in 1970. The list goes on: hand calculators, cameras, metal-forming machine tools, food processors, sporting equipment, motorcycles, stereo components, textile machinery, watches, tires, video components, pianos, footwear. For the last five years we have been running substantial trade deficits—in 1980 approaching \$25 billion. Ten years ago productivity—real output per hour of work—rose at an annual rate of 2.9 percent; since 1977 productivity has declined .4 percent a year. We now have the highest percentage of obsolete plants, the lowest percentage of capital investment, and the lowest growth in productivity of any major industrial society other than Great Britain.

In the face of this precipitous decline liberalism has been all but silent. It has been replaced by another ideology that promises prosperity, but not social justice. This new ideology calls for government measures to raise the level of savings and reduce consumption,

so that new capital can be created without fueling inflation. Although differing in particulars, proposals that apply this ideology typically call for across-the-board income tax reductions coupled with tax reductions on savings and investment; reductions in government spending, particularly for huge and growing programs like Social Security, Medicare, and welfare; and a relaxation of government regulations pertaining to health, safety, and the environment.

These proposals would result in less social justice, if we define social justice as an equitable distribution of income and of public goods like clean air, clean water, opportunities for outdoor recreation, safe products, and safe working environments. Any across-the-board reduction in income taxes will especially benefit upper-income groups that now pay the most taxes. In addition, any taxing scheme that makes it more costly to spend earnings than to save them inevitably will hurt the poor (who have no choice but to spend a high proportion of their earnings) more than the rich (who can afford to defer consumption). This regressiveness will be made worse by cuts in Social Security, Medicare, and welfare, upon which the poor and elderly are particularly dependent. Similarly, proposals to relax regulations governing health, safety, and the environment invariably will make the distribution of public goods less equitable. To the extent that clean air, clean water, outdoor recreation, safe products, and safe working conditions are not available to the population in general, they will become private commodities available only to those who can afford to buy them, by living in exclusive neighborhoods, buying bottled water, vacationing in pristine environments, and avoiding hazardous jobs.

However troubling these proposals may be to the national conscience, the explicit promise they offer of economic growth and productivity has given them political legitimacy. By abandoning its own promise of prosperity, liberalism has ceded the very ideal that rendered its vision of social justice palatable to the majority. Without that promise, liberalism's call for social justice has become something akin to charity, to be balanced against the more compelling goals of growth and productivity—a moral luxury to be afforded when and to the extent we can. At worst, it has become a demand for preserving economic relationships as they were when times were better: controlling price increases, erecting tariffs and quotas against foreign imports, regulating factory closings and reloca-

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tions, limiting direct investment abroad, and investing public funds in dying industries. Without the promise of prosperity, liberalism's argument to the majority has become a paean to the status quo.

If liberalism is to regain ideological predominance during the 1980s it must reestablish a rational connection between prosperity and social justice. But it cannot do so by means of now discredited notions of aggregate demand management. Conservatives are right when they focus on the supply side of the economic ledger and ask what conditions will generate growth and productivity. It is their answer that is wrong, not their question.

LIBERALISM'S answer might be based in part on the experience of our international competitors who have grown and prospered during our decline. If there is a connection between prosperity and social justice, it is to be found there—in Japan's spectacular rise during the past 10 years from 40 percent of our per capita national income to 85 percent; in West Germany's rise during the same period from 68 percent to 105 percent; and in Sweden's rise from 90 percent to 112 percent. By any measure, each of these economies has outperformed ours over the last 10 years. Even though they are more dependent on imported oil than we are, their productivity increased at a faster rate than ours and their levels of unemployment remained lower. And notwithstanding what appears to be a pending worldwide recession, within the next few years citizens in these countries are likely to enjoy a higher standard of living than our own citizens.

This growth has been accomplished in conjunction with, not in opposition to, social justice. The distribution of income in these countries is more equitable than it is in the United States. In Sweden, the poorest 10 percent of the population now receives 2.4 percent of the yearly national income; in Japan, 3.2 percent; in West Germany, 2.9 percent. In the US the poorest 10 percent of our population receives a much smaller share—only 1.5 percent of our yearly national income. Moreover, the salary differential between highest- and lowest-paid employees is much smaller in these countries than it is in the US. Swedish, Japanese, and West German corporate executives earn only about 40 to 60 percent more money than the lowest-paid workers in their companies. In the US it is not unusual for executives to take home three times the pay of the lowest-paid workers. Some five-year pacts for corporate officials run to eight million dollars or more, including pensions, stock options, accumulated bonuses, and fringe benefits. And corporate taxes are higher in these countries than in the US.

Social security and unemployment insurance are more generous in Sweden, Japan, and West Germany: 20.1 percent of Sweden's annual income goes to social security, while 90 percent of the Swedish unemployed receive substantial compensation; in Japan, 9.7 percent of national income goes to social security, and 59 per-

cent of the unemployed receive compensation—but Japanese companies provide many additional unemployment and retirement benefits that bring the total much higher; and in West Germany, 19.9 percent of national income goes to social security and 75 percent of the unemployed receive compensation. In the United States, on the other hand, only 9.3 percent of our national income goes to paying Social Security, and only 58 percent of our unemployed are compensated.

In addition, employees have more job security and better working conditions abroad: in Sweden, Japan, and West Germany workers cannot be fired arbitrarily, yet the vast majority of US employees can be dismissed without notice or reason. Swedish workers get five weeks of paid vacation each year; Japanese and West German workers receive four weeks. In the United States, the average employee receives only two and a half weeks of vacation per year. In Sweden, 83 percent of employees are unionized; in Japan and West Germany approximately 40 percent of the work force is unionized. Workers in all three countries participate in management decision-making through various management-labor councils and committees. By contrast, less than 21 percent of US employees are unionized, and there is little opportunity for labor participation in management.

Nor have these countries sacrificed health, safety, and the environment in pursuit of growth and productivity. Unlike the US, each has a substantial national health insurance program, financed by government and industry. Infant mortality (a measure of public health) is substantially lower in Sweden (eight per 1,000 live births), Japan (8.9), and West Germany (nine) than it is in the United States (14.1). Industrial accidents per 100,000 people are fewer in Sweden (2.4) and West Germany (2.5) than in the United States (3.1), although Japan's record is worse than ours in this regard (3.7). And environmental regulation in each of these countries is at least as strict as it is now in the United States; the environments of these countries are less contaminated by carbon monoxide, hydrocarbons, and nitrogen oxides than ours.

BUT WAIT, you say. These nations can enjoy prosperity and social justice because they don't have our huge military expenditures. Last year we spent \$520 per person on defense, while Sweden spent only \$103, Japan \$87, and West Germany \$266. Arguably, had we been able to invest most of those funds on research, development, new factories and equipment, we could have enjoyed higher growth and had additional funds left over for social programs and for public goods like clean air. Viewed in these terms, our problem has been precisely what conservative supply-siders say it has been: too few resources for new investment. According to this view, unless we drastically reduce military spending (a course many liberals would feel uneasy in recommending), we have no choice but to sacrifice some degree of social justice

for the sake of greater productivity.

But look again. Although conservatives place great faith in capital formation as the primary source of future productivity, the relationship between capital investment and return is not at all clear. Our rate of productivity growth declined between 1967 and 1973, when the rate of growth of capital formation was stronger than it has been at any time in the postwar period. Indeed, in the last five years, a larger share of our national product has been devoted to business investment than at any other time since World War II. Our annual investment in manufacturing as a percentage of manufacturing output has increased steadily over the decade, and has not been substantially below that of Japan, West Germany, or Sweden. In any event, as our economy has shifted from manufacturing to services, the amount of capital we need to sustain rapid growth has diminished. Between 1960 and 1978, while employment in manufacturing rose 21 percent, the number of persons providing services grew by 72 percent. Service businesses use less capital. Invested capital per employee (in 1972 dollars) amounted in 1976 to \$29,100 in manufacturing but only slightly more than \$20,000 in the service sector.

If our overall level of investment is not responsible for our economic woes, what is? How have our international competitors managed to achieve unparalleled growth and social justice without investing a much higher percentage of their manufacturing income? In advanced industrial countries productivity and economic growth depend not so much on overall level of investment as upon how investment is used. Within complex industrial systems there are so many potential bottlenecks and critical levers, so many transactions to be coordinated within and among public and private bureaucracies, and therefore so much room for either productive collaboration or crass manipulation, that the amount of resources available for investment may be less important than how the investment is directed and absorbed. Put simply, the organization of an advanced economy can either encourage productivity—by channeling investment into industries or processes which are capable of yielding high output, and generating high morale and motivation in the work force—or it can discourage productivity by doing the opposite.

How have we used our precious capital? Much of it has been put to non-productive uses—rearranging existing industrial assets rather than building new productive strength. In the last three years, for example, some \$100 billion of corporate cash resources have been used to acquire existing corporate assets through tender offers—offers by one company to purchase a

controlling share of the stock of another company. So far this year alone, merger activity is running at a \$50 billion annual rate. Or consider the rampant speculation now under way in commodity futures: 76 million futures contracts were traded last year, up from 13.6 million in 1970—a 458 percent gain compared to a 174 percent increase in stock market volume during the same period. Foreign currency contracts, financial futures, and real estate add to the growing list of speculative investments. Indeed, collectively we invest more money in mortgages than we do in all US businesses put together—and the bulk of this goes into inflating the value of existing homes rather than into new home construction. We also invest over \$10 billion a year in lawsuits among companies.

Although this asset-rearranging activity does not directly use up scarce capital resources—dollars merely exchange hands among speculative players—it is indirectly wasteful. It creates vast service industries in law, accounting, tax consulting, and finance, to which some of our most talented people are drawn. It diverts the attention of corporate executives, who spend their time fending off takeovers, responding to depositions, and devising novel tax and accounting schemes rather than building better products.

SWEDEN, Japan, and West Germany invest a much smaller percentage of their savings in these sorts of non-productive, asset-rearranging ventures. Unfriendly corporate takeovers are rare. Proportionately fewer resources flow into home mortgages or futures contracts. There are far fewer lawsuits, fewer lawyers and accountants. Out of every 10,000 citizens in Japan, only one is a lawyer and three are accountants. In the US, 20 are lawyers and 40 are accountants. Out of the same group in Japan, 400 are engineers and scientists; here only 70 are engineers or scientists.

Nor, in comparison to Sweden, Japan, and West Germany, have we done a particularly good job of motivating our work force. Our industries are plagued by chronic absenteeism and work stoppages. The average number of days lost each year to industrial disputes for every 1,000 employees is 1,349 in the US, compared to 39 in Sweden, 244 in Japan, and 56 in West Germany. Moreover, American craftsmanship is notoriously poor. "Made in USA" is becoming synonymous with "second-rate." Products manufactured in Sweden, Japan, and West Germany are famous for their fine craftsmanship.

Disaffection among US employees is by no means limited to the lowest rungs of the employment ladder. US companies are discovering that they must keep a watchful eye on middle-level executives, lest they systematically embezzle company funds, abuse perquisites, or abscond with trade secrets. The US Chamber of Commerce estimates that American businesses lose approximately \$44 billion each year from white-collar crime. Loyalty cannot be presumed even at the highest levels, as fast-paced senior executives increas-

Coming:

Reagan Versus the Poor.

ingly desert their company suites for larger bonuses and better stock options elsewhere. The average tenure of today's chief executive is less than four years—hardly time enough in which to worry about long-term productivity.

It is all too easy, when faced with these realities, to blame our weak national character, our moral decrepitude, or our narcissistic national impulses. But citizens of Sweden, Japan, and West Germany are as acquisitive, self-indulgent, and fun-loving as we. On the other hand, these three countries represent as diverse a set of histories, traditions, and norms as are likely to be found among advanced industrial nations. So there is no culturally determined secret to their success. The difference between them and us is less one of national character than it is of economic organization, and the effects of that organization upon a citizenry's sense of shared purpose.

Citizens of Sweden, West Germany, and Japan appear to have more of a shared commitment to productivity. There are, to be sure, differences of opinion in each of these countries about how to achieve productivity and there are the inevitable pulls and tugs of interest groups and geographic regions vying for prominence. But overall, the extent to which all segments of the work force—blue-collar, white-collar, management, government—take responsibility for improving industrial output is impressive. Indeed, blue-collar employees in these countries are among the most vocal proponents of new productive investment.

By contrast, our work force at every level lacks a sense of shared purpose. In a Harris poll conducted several years ago, 70 percent of US workers agreed that management and shareholders benefit from increases in productivity; but less than 20 percent felt that employees also benefit. Too often productivity improvements result in layoffs, as fewer employees are needed to accomplish the same tasks. Alternatively, cash-rich companies are seen to plow their earnings into acquisitions and mergers rather than into expansion and additional jobs. Or when expansion does occur, too often it is in the form of new plants built as far away as possible from unionized regions of the country, where low-wage labor can be exploited. Increasingly this has come to mean Mexico, South Korea, and Taiwan.

Our productive processes are marked by suspicion, distrust, insecurity, and opportunism. Employees—white-collar and blue-collar alike—are sacked without warning. Factories close without warning. Even executives are fired without warning. This fearful atmosphere inhibits the flow of accurate information up the corporate hierarchy. Bad news is buried below, until—months or years later—it blossoms into a major crisis or scandal. Job insecurity discourages cooperation even among employees at roughly the same level. Why help your junior colleague if there is a risk he will displace you when he learns his job? Since the “system” appears to be rigged, the only rational response is

to be selfish and cunning.

Within a productive system that depends on cooperation and good faith, we have spawned a dominant work ethic characterized by cynical indifference and manipulation. Its most visible symptoms are shoddy workmanship and work stoppages. In its more insidious form it means a paper entrepreneurialism that merely rearranges industrial assets through merger, acquisition, lawsuit, tax dodge, or outright speculation, rather than devoting capital to new production.

We cannot contrive social cohesion, of course. Our melting-pot culture invariably will suffer from tensions that more homogeneous nations can avoid. But a collective commitment to increased productivity is possible here if premised upon a vision of social justice in which the fruits of productivity are equitably shared, as they are in Sweden, Japan, and West Germany. A narrower differential between the highest- and lowest-paid employees; more generous Social Security, unemployment, and health insurance; a greater degree of job security and job safety; cleaner and healthier environments; broader participation in management—these factors may account for the greater shared commitment to productivity in Sweden, Japan, and West Germany. Rather than constituting luxuries to be traded off against productivity, these elements of a more equitable industrial organization may be critical to achieving it.

IS SOCIAL JUSTICE essential to productivity in an advanced industrial economy? That is the central issue that liberalism must begin to address in earnest. The task will not be easy. The data are disconcertingly “soft”—describing the psychological and social conditions under which productivity thrives. But a set of hypotheses about human motivation in an advanced industrial system based upon social justice is no less plausible, and no more verifiable, than the very different social and psychological hypotheses behind the conservative ideology.

To the question, “what conditions will generate growth and productivity?” conservatives have responded with a set of prescriptions premised upon the hypothetical power of human greed and fear. A society that simultaneously offers both the prospect of substantial wealth and the threat of severe poverty surely will inspire great feats of personal daring, dazzling entrepreneurialism, and cutthroat ambition. But just as surely it may reduce the capacity of its members to work together toward a common end. The conservative promise of prosperity is an ideology suited to a frontier economy in which risk-taking is apt to be more socially productive than cooperation, but it is hardly appropriate to an advanced industrial economy in which collaboration is critical. Liberalism must re-establish the connection between prosperity and social justice. In an advanced industrial economy like ours, and like those of our more productive neighbors, this is the only supply-side theory that makes lasting sense.

Books and the Arts

Stanley Kauffmann on films

Mixed Grills

Fort Apache, The Bronx. Paul Newman, the celebrated racing driver, takes time off for his avocation, acting. But not much time. He chose a script (by Heywood Gould) about police work in the South Bronx that he could loll his way through. Every millimeter of his role, lengthwise or in depth, is stuff familiar from many previous films and TV series. It's hard to understand how people can find the energy to get out of bed in the morning and do another day's work on a film like this, especially if, as with Newman, money is not an object.

What's more serious is that Newman hasn't really gotten out of bed. His performance is extremely lazy. He's a patrolman who once rose to detective and has been busted back to the beat, to the worst of assignments—a precinct so bad that the men and women of the force have dubbed the station house *Fort Apache*. Newman does the jocular and quiet and romantic sequences with almost an embarrassment rather than a presence, as if he were a novice; and the big moments, like the death of his girl friend, are done with the stalest of "choices," as actors say.

This is not a comment I ever expected to make on Newman. He has (had?) the talent to make him an actor of world rank on stage and on screen, and for reasons of his own—if they are reasons—he is dribbling it away.

Edward Asner, the TV star, plays a gruff captain who takes over the precinct. It's just Asner, fatter. The only person worth note is Rachel Ticotin who, as a Puerto Rican nurse, has immediate charm.

The script is just one more reshuffling of the police-script deck: drugs, prostitution, corruption, riots, murder, even emergency obstetrics. The only interest is that the film is also one more

unwitting report from the battlefield of America's unacknowledged civil war: not nearly so much between haves and have-nots as between those with at least some hope and those with none. That war is ravaging and draining American cities, American morale, and absolutely nothing substantive is in sight to end it. The new jingoism of the new administration, so opportunely helped by the return of the hostages and the chance for whoop-up that this gave the media, is at best a tiny Band-Aid on a bad wound. Of course a nice, neat, non-nuclear war would help, just enough of a war to siphon off the excess population in our cities without getting them flattened. . . . Meanwhile, the civil war continues. The fact that even this trite film can remind us of it indicates how ingrained it is.

Spetters. The refuge of naturalism—in which a dumb picture like the one above hides—is also available in Holland. "Refuge" because every pretentious but unimaginative director can protect himself from his imaginative bankruptcy by slamming in a lot of veristic details and can protect himself from charges of exploitation by posing as a fearless teller of truth. This is hardly a definition of naturalism, just a way of exploiting it. In this Dutch film, as in Newman's, facile sordidness is being waved as a banner. The unsparing candor could well be spared; the revelations reveal zilch.

Spetters, which translates as "hot-shots," is about a group of young working-class men and women in Rotterdam today. The assortment is pretty much what you'd expect in this sort of film: the group includes good and bad, sensitive and callous, athletes, sexual and otherwise, heterosexual and otherwise.

So we get fight scenes, love affairs, comic interludes, plus such apparently obligatory scenes as a homosexual gang rape, a scene in which some young men compare the size of their organs, and other really important exposés from the Netherlands of the Netherlands.

It was directed by Paul Verhoeven, whose World War II film *Soldier of Orange* was stilted. It was written by Gerard Soeteman who a few years ago gave us (that verb!) *Cathy Toppel*, a turn-of-the-century Dutch Nana. If Verhoeven and Soeteman are honest men, they are not very bright; if less than honest, they are not very clever.

Tell Me A Riddle. The best news about this film is that it's controverting a rule of thumb. The rule says that pictures about old people don't succeed; and in New York, at any rate, this picture about an old couple is doing quite well.

Besides that, the good news is Melvyn Douglas, giving a much better performance than his much-praised but quite accessible role in *Being There*. You can see that, as this long-retired Russian-born house painter, he went over all the easy stuff that would be available to an actor and discarded it. He looked for the best kind of novelty: truth. You can see him feeling along the contours of an undistinguished piece of writing for ways to feed life into it, to give it subtleties of action and silence that are deeper than anything he has to say.

The bad news is Lila Kedrova as his wife. Kedrova's chief asset is her age. Our perceptions often go numb about older actors, especially if they have for-

Films Worth Seeing

From the Life of the Marionettes. Ingmar Bergman once more exploring why lives that ought to be happy aren't. Not his best, but powerful.

Kagemusha. War as universe in 16th-century Japan. Not Akira Kurosawa's best, still it's Homeric.

Raging Bull. The squalid life of a prize-fighter exploded into an archetype of modern temperament by Robert De Niro and Martin Scorsese. If you like boxing films, see it. If not, certainly see it.

Tess. Much more Roman Polanski than Hardy, but it's the surest Polanski in years. Much more Nastassia Kinski than Tess, but she's lovely.

SK

eign accents. We tend to think that if they've been around a long time, they must be adept; and the accent sends the American inferiority complex revving into high gear. In the 10 years after 1936 it was Maria Ouspenskaya who ruled this particular roost—a good teacher, I've read, but an unbearably mannered performer. At the moment it's Kedrova. She simply has no technique, no validity, no interest in validity or her role or her fellow actors. All she does is search for the moments in her role to be coy, to be vulnerably appealing; if she can find enough of them and gets the chance to milk them, she is said to have given a good performance. Elizabeth Bergner—who is still going strong in Germany, I think—relied centrally on the same appeal, but she supported it with a steely network of fine trickery. If you can imagine a Bergner who is all saccharine and no skill, that's Kedrova.

The script, from a novella by Tillie Olsen, is a slow slide downhill, with no kind of motion other than that slide. Early on, Kedrova is found to have an incurable disease. The news is kept from her, but her husband knows, and he takes her on a trip to visit their children and grandchildren. She dies in San Francisco in the loft of her liberated social-worker granddaughter, Brooke Adams; and the closing, purportedly

heartbreaking moment has Douglas and and granddaughter dancing by the deathbed to show us that joy is remembered and life goes on. Woven into the script, in an attempt to give this slow linear attrition some depth, are flashbacks of the old woman's revolutionary youth in Russia and the implication that this socially valuable person was shackled by marriage, however loving.

The director was the actress Lee Grant, making her debut in this new job. Technically there's nothing much to say about her work: she does the sort of direction that many experienced actors have done with the support of a good team. It proves yet again that anyone who has spent considerable time around film studios and can afford a competent staff can turn out a passably made film.

Imaginatively it's another story. The picture runs on two tracks, present and past, the latter always misty, as in Lumet's *The Pawnbroker*, for instance. In animated films they call it mickey-mousing when the music moves slavishly in the rhythm of a person or animal walking. Grant mickey-mouses the present with the past: a song now is paralleled with a song then, a kiss now with a kiss then, and so on. It soon becomes so pat that it's unaffecting, and helps to make the film a very long day's journey into nothing.

that the farmers were able to bring it off. With the benefit of hindsight we can offer a number of explanations. For one thing, the generals whom the British sent to put down the rebels proved to be somewhat less than brilliant in using the immense force at their disposal. For another thing, the colonists got a great deal of assistance from England's old enemy, France. But perhaps most important, the American Revolution seems to have elicited from those who participated in it a response that no other event or situation in American history has been able to do.

It was not that extraordinarily large numbers of people were ready to sacrifice their lives or their fortunes for the common good. That has often happened in times of crisis. And the revolution did not in fact induce this kind of sacrifice very widely. It was always difficult to fill up enlistments in the Continental Army. What was extraordinary about the revolution was the talent it generated, the number of men of genius who stepped out of farmyards and plantations, out of countinghouses and courtrooms, to play a leading role in winning the war and then in building a national government. Prominent among them was George Washington, who more than any other single man was responsible for bringing success to this seemingly foolhardy enterprise. Since there was nothing in his previous career to suggest that he could play so large a role, it may be worth asking what there was in him that enabled him to do what he did.

This is not an easy task, for George Washington is and was a hard man to know. Part of the difficulty in approaching him comes from the heroic image in which we have cast him and which already enveloped him in his own lifetime. But it is not simply the plaster image that stands between him and us. We have other national heroes who also became legendary figures in their own lifetimes, a Benjamin Franklin, an Andrew Jackson, an Abraham Lincoln; and yet with them we find no great difficulty in pushing past the image to find the man. In their letters and other writings, in the countless anecdotes they inspired, we can meet them on familiar terms and feel comfortable in their company.

But not George Washington. The familiar anecdotes about Washington tell us to keep our distance. The most arresting one is told about a gathering at the time of the Constitutional Con-

The greatness of George Washington.

A Sense of Power

by Edmund S. Morgan

When a crowd of American farmers opened fire on the regular troops of the British army some 200 years ago, the action must have seemed foolhardy to any impartial observer. Such an observer might have been a little surprised at the events that immediately followed, when the farmers put the regulars to

route, chased them from Concord to Boston, and laid siege to that town. But however impressive this performance, it did not alter the fact that the British army was probably the most powerful in the world, having succeeded scarcely a dozen years before in defeating the armies of France, England's only serious rival. For a handful of colonists, unorganized, without any regular source of arms or ammunition, with no army and no navy, to take on the world's greatest power in open war must still have looked like a foolhardy enterprise.

Somehow or other it proved not to be. Yet it remains something of a puzzle

Edmund S. Morgan is Sterling Professor of History at Yale University and author of *The Challenge of the American Revolution* (Norton). This essay is adapted from *The Genius of George Washington*. ©1980 by Edmund S. Morgan. Used with permission of W. W. Norton & Co., Inc.

vention in 1787. One evening during the sessions of the convention a group of Washington's old friends from war-time days were remarking on the extraordinarily reserved and remote manner he maintained, even among his most intimate acquaintances. One of them, Gouverneur Morris, who was always full of boldness and wit, had the nerve to disagree with the rest about Washington's aloofness. He could be as familiar with Washington, he said, as with any of his other friends. Alexander Hamilton called his bluff by offering to provide a dinner with the best of wine for a dozen of them if Morris would, at the next reception Washington gave, simply walk up to him, gently slap him on the shoulder, and say, "My dear general, how happy I am to see you look so well." On the appointed evening a substantial number were already present when Morris arrived, walked up to Washington, bowed, shook hands, and then placed his left hand on Washington's shoulder and said, "My dear General, I am very happy to see you look so well." The response was immediate and icy. Washington reached up and removed the hand, stepped back, and fixed his eyes in silence on Morris, until Morris retreated abashed into the crowd. The company looked on in dismay, and no one ever tried it again.

It seems today a rather extravagant reaction on the part of our national hero, a bit of overkill. It makes us almost as embarrassed for Washington as for poor Morris. Yet it may serve as an appropriate starting place for our

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inquiry, because Washington's dignity and reserve, the aloofness that separated him from his contemporaries and still separates him from us, were, I believe, an integral part of the genius that enabled him to defeat the armies of Great Britain and to establish the United States as an independent world power.

Washington's genius lay in his understanding of power, both military power and political power, an understanding unmatched by that of any of his contemporaries. At a time when the United States needed nothing quite so much as military power but had very little, this hitherto obscure Virginia planter knew how to make the best possible use of what there was. And after securing independence, when the United States was trying to establish itself in a war-torn world, he knew how to deal with foreign countries to the maximum advantage of his own. He was not a bookish man. He contributed nothing to the formal political thought of the American Revolution, nor did he produce any treatises on military strategy or tactics. But he did understand power in every form.

At the simplest level Washington's understanding of power showed itself in the ability to take command. Some men have the quality; others do not. Washington had it, and in exercising it he nourished the aloofness that became his most conspicuous trait. That aloofness was deliberate, as it may be in many men who have the gift of command. In Washington it may have grown around a nucleus of inborn native reserve, but Washington purposely cultivated it. We should not mistake it for arrogance. Washington did crave honor and pursued it relentlessly, but he did not deceive himself with that spurious substitute for honor which is arrogance. His aloofness had nothing to do with arrogance. It had to do with command.

He explained the matter in a letter to a fledgling colonel in the Continental Army in 1775: "Be easy and condescending in your deportment to your officers," he wrote, "but not too familiar, lest you subject yourself to a want of that respect, which is necessary to support a proper command."

Washington practiced what he preached, and as his talents for command developed there were fewer and fewer persons with whom he could allow himself to be familiar. As commander in chief and later as president,

he could scarcely afford it with anyone. The remoteness that still surrounds him was a necessary adjunct of the power he was called upon to exercise.

But Washington's understanding of power went far beyond mere posture. Although he had not had a great deal of military experience before he took charge of the Continental Army in 1775, his participation in the French and Indian War from 1754 to 1758 had exposed him to the geographical conditions of warfare on the American continent and the way in which they must affect the exercise of military power. As commander of the revolutionary army he was quick to perceive the significance of geographical factors that his opponents seem never to have grasped. At the outset of the war, when the British almost caught him in the Battle of Long Island, he learned the danger of allowing his forces to be bottled up in any location where their retreat might be cut off. Having learned that lesson, he did not make the same mistake again. Though he was not always able to prevent his subordinates from making it, his constant alertness to it enabled him to keep his precarious army in existence. In September 1777, for example, he sent a letter on the subject to Brigadier General Thomas Nelson in Virginia. In the light of future events it was a remarkable letter. Nelson had proposed to station his forces at Hampton and Yorktown, which lay at the end of the peninsula between the James and the York rivers. Here, of course, they would be in a position to observe the movement of any British troops into the area by sea. But the location, Washington perceived at once, was one where they could be trapped, and he quickly warned Nelson against it. The troops, he said,

by being upon a narrow neck of land, would be in danger of being cut off. The Enemy might very easily throw up a few Ships into York and James's river, as far as Queens Creek; and land a body of men there, who by throwing up a few Redoubts, would intercept their retreat and oblige them to surrender at discretion.

Four years later Lord Cornwallis made the mistake that Washington warned Nelson against, and Washington pounced. It was almost like taking candy from a child. For Cornwallis it was the world turned upside down, but for Washington it was a lesson learned long before in the geography of power.

Of course, if the British navy had been on hand in sufficient strength,

Cornwallis might have escaped by sea. But Washington did not move until he had the French navy to dominate the seas nearby. He had realized early in the war that without local naval superiority to stand off the British warships, he could not capture a British army at any point on the coast. Washington understood this better than his more experienced French helpers. The Comte de Grasse, in command of the French navy, seems to have missed the whole point of the Yorktown strategy, complaining to Washington that he would prefer to cruise off New York where he might encounter the main British fleet, rather than be an idle spectator in the Chesapeake. Washington knew, however, that even with de Grasse on hand, he was not strong enough to attack the main British force in New York. But by picking off Cornwallis at Yorktown he could deal the British a crippling blow.

Washington's appreciation of geographical factors made him not only wary of being trapped like Cornwallis but also averse to defending any particular point, including cities. The British armies were much more powerful than his and capable of taking any place they wanted. It was therefore not worthwhile to erect elaborate stationary defenses. When General Howe was approaching Philadelphia and Congress wanted Washington to divert troops to the preparation of fortifications for the city's defense, he refused. If he could defeat Howe in the field, he said, the defenses would be unnecessary. If he could not, then the time and labor spent on them would be lost, for the fortifications would sooner or later fall to Howe's superior forces and could then be used against the Americans. It was imperative, he believed, to keep his small force concentrated and mobile, so that he could strike effectively when opportunity presented. "It would give me infinite pleasure," he assured the Congress, "to afford protection to every individual and to every Spot of Ground on the whole of the United States." But that was not the way wars were won. Wars were won by destroying or disarming the enemy, not by trying to spare civilians from occupation. And Washington was bent on winning.

Washington, in other words, was or became a good field general. But his understanding of military power did not stop at the ability to command troops and deploy them effectively. He also understood that the power he could wield in battle depended on the

willingness of the civil government to supply him with men and money. He understood the political basis of military power, and he also understood that in the new United States this was a very precarious basis. His army was the creature of a Congress that never quite dared to act like a government. Congress declared independence. It authorized the creation of the army. It even authorized the creation of a navy. But it did not attempt to levy taxes to pay for these things. Instead, it recommended to the states that they make contributions, specifying the amount for each state. Whether a state followed the recommendation depended on public opinion. And public opinion was as fickle then as now. Rumors of peace and of British surrender came with every skirmish, and each one produced a debilitating effect on the willingness of taxpayers in the different states to advance money for a war that might soon be over.

Men were almost as hard to get as the money to pay and clothe and feed them. As a result Washington was never able to build an army strong enough to face the British on even terms. At the outset of the war he had

hoped to enlist soldiers for the duration. Instead, Congress provided for enlistments of a year only. It took almost that long to collect and build a disciplined fighting force, even from men who already knew how to fire a gun. By the time he had them trained, their terms would be up, and off they would go, frequently taking with them the guns he had issued them. In their place would often come raw militia on even shorter terms, men who were not used to obeying commands and who did not take kindly to them, men who were ready to head for home and tend the crops the moment they were offended by some officer's efforts to bring them in line. In 1780, after the war had dragged on for five years. Washington was still trying to get Congress to place the army on a more lasting basis. If they had done so at the beginning, he reminded them, his forces would

not have been the greatest part of the War inferior to the enemy, indebted for our safety to their inactivity, enduring frequently the mortification of seeing inviting opportunities to ruin them, pass unimproved for want of a force which the Country was completely able to afford.

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Although Washington's complaints to Congress were fruitless, he never appealed over the heads of Congress to their constituents. He refrained from doing so in part because the very effort to explain the situation to the public would also have explained it to the enemy. He did not dare to advertise the weakness of his force, when the only thing between him and defeat was the fact that the enemy did not realize how weak he was. But his restraint was also based on principle. In spite of the imperious manner with which he bolstered his ability to command, Washington was a republican. He had been fully persuaded that the king of England and the minions surrounding him were conspiring to destroy the liberties of Americans. More than that, he was persuaded that kings in general were a bad lot. He welcomed Thomas Paine's devastating attack not only on George III but on monarchy itself. He never doubted that the United States must be a republic. And the principles of republican liberty as he saw them dictated that the military must be forever subordinate to the civil power. Although he could lament the short-sightedness exhibited by Congress and the state legislatures, he never even suggested that he and his army should be anything but their servants.

WASHINGTON realized that he could have commanded an immense popular following in defiance of the do-nothing Congress and that he could have counted on the backing of his officers and troops in such an adventure. But he accepted the premises of republican government as an Oliver Cromwell never did. Although it meant submitting to a body that became increasingly incompetent, irresponsible, and corrupt, he never sought power on any other terms than those on which he had initially accepted it, as servant of the people. And when his men grew exasperated with the failure of the government to feed, arm, or pay them, he stood between them and Congress and thwarted every threat against the civil power. Enlisted men mounted mutinies, and he faced them down with his steely authority. Some of his officers conspired to seize power, and he nipped the movement in the bud.

Washington was fighting not simply for independence but for an independent republic. He was fighting a people's war, and he knew that he would lose what he was fighting for if he tried

to take more power than the people would freely give. One of the difficulties of republican government, as he explained later to uncomprehending foreigners, was that the people must always feel an evil before they can see it. "This," he admitted, "is productive of errors and temporary evils, but generally these evils are of a nature to work their own cure." In the end, he believed, the people would do the right thing.

Washington's patience in waiting for the people to do the right thing is the more remarkable because he knew that the ineffectiveness of Congress not only prolonged the war needlessly but also exposed the country to needless perils. Because Congress lacked the nerve to vote him the needed men and money, he had to rely on assistance from the French in order to bring the war to a successful conclusion. And reliance on the French could have meant the loss of the very independence Americans were fighting for. Once French forces were engaged on the American continent, Washington feared that they would wish to invade and occupy Canada. Ostensibly the United States would be the sole beneficiary of such a move, for the French agreed to forgo any territorial claims on the continent in their treaty of alliance with the United States. But Washington had no illusions about the binding power of treaties.

Unfortunately Congress did have illusions. At the beginning of the war Americans had hoped that Canada would join them in rebellion against England, and Washington himself thought it highly desirable to eliminate this bastion of British power. He had sent an expedition to effect the liberation of the province, but the inhabitants had not responded in the manner hoped for, and the expedition was a disaster. With the arrival of French troops, congressmen developed an enthusiasm for trying again with French forces. The population of Canada was mainly French, and it was plausible to suppose that they would welcome their countrymen more warmly than they had the Americans. But Washington was alarmed. He would not have been in a position to refuse if the French had decided to employ their troops in this way, but he did not want Congress encouraging them to do so. He wrote out all the tactical reasons he could think of against the expedition and sent them in an official communication to Congress. Then he wrote out a private, confidential letter to Henry Laurens, the presi-

dent of Congress, explaining his real objection. The letter remains one of the more striking examples of the quick perception of political realities that lay behind Washington's understanding of power.

The expedition, he explained to Laurens, would mean

the introduction of a large body of French troops into Canada, and putting them in possession of the capital of that Province, attached to them by all the ties of blood, habits, manners, religion and former connexions of government. I fear this would be too great a temptation to be resisted by any power actuated by the common maxims of national policy.

He went on to outline all the economic and political benefits that France would gain by holding on to the province in violation of the treaty. It would not be difficult to find a plausible pretext. The United States had borrowed funds from France on a large scale; and the United States government, if one could dignify Congress by that name, had no power to tax its citizens in order to repay the debt. The United States could scarcely object if France retained Canada as security for the payment. "Resentment, reproaches, and submission" would be the only recourse left to the United States. And Washington went on to read a gentle lecture to the gullible members of Congress: "Men are very apt," he said,

to run into extremes; hatred to England may carry some into an excess of Confidence in France; especially when motives of gratitude are thrown into the scale. Men of this description would be unwilling to suppose France capable of acting so ungenerous a part. I am heartily disposed to entertain the most favourable sentiments of our new ally and to cherish them in others to a reasonable degree; but it is a maxim founded on the universal experience of mankind, that no nation is to be trusted farther than it is bound by its interest; and no prudent statesman or politician will venture to depart from it.

II

With the victory at Yorktown and the peace that followed, the United States had no further need of the military wisdom of which it had made such poor use. But Washington as a civilian was no less cogent in his understanding of power than he had been as commander in chief. His response to the postwar vicissitudes of the nation matched that of the most constructive political thinkers on the scene, and his influence may

have been greater than theirs because of the enormous prestige he now carried.

The ineffectiveness of Congress that had hampered Washington's prosecution of the war continued to threaten the viability of the new republic in peacetime. Having submitted to the military loss of her mainland colonies, England set about to regain them by economic warfare, or so it seemed. In the early years of peace English merchants, offering liberal credits, sent shiploads of goods to their old customers in America, and Americans rang up a huge debt. But when Americans tried to ship their own goods to their old prewar markets in the British West Indies and elsewhere, England closed the ports to them. Before the Americans could gain new outlets for their produce many found themselves bankrupt. Washington's reaction was that power should be met with power. If England barred American ships, Americans should bar English ships until England relented. But for some states to do so and others not would defeat the strategy, and Congress had no authority to regulate trade for the whole nation. Washington supported every move to give it such authority, but at the same time he despaired of putting power in the hands of men who had demonstrated again and again their timidity in using it. What was the use of giving them more powers, he asked, when "the members seem to be so much afraid of exerting those which they already have, that no opportunity is slipped of surrendering them, or referring the exercise of them, to the States individually?"

Washington had been convinced, long before the war ended, that the national government as it operated under the Articles of Confederation was not adequate to carry out its functions; and he feared it had in effect written its own death warrant by failing to exercise what powers it had. "Extensive powers not exercised," he once observed, "... have I believe scarcely ever failed to ruin the possessor." But he hoped against hope that this would not be the case with the United States. When the inhabitants of western Massachusetts rose in arms against their own elected government in Shays' Rebellion, and neither the state nor the national government seemed ready to do anything about it, it looked as though the case was hopeless. Henry Lee urged Washington to use his influence to quiet the

troubles, but Washington snapped back, "Influence is no Government. . . . If they have *real* grievances, redress them. . . . If they have not, employ the force of government against them at once." It was mortifying to see the new American republic exhibiting the weakness that doctrinaire European political philosophers had always attributed to republics. "How melancholy is the reflection," Washington wrote to James Madison,

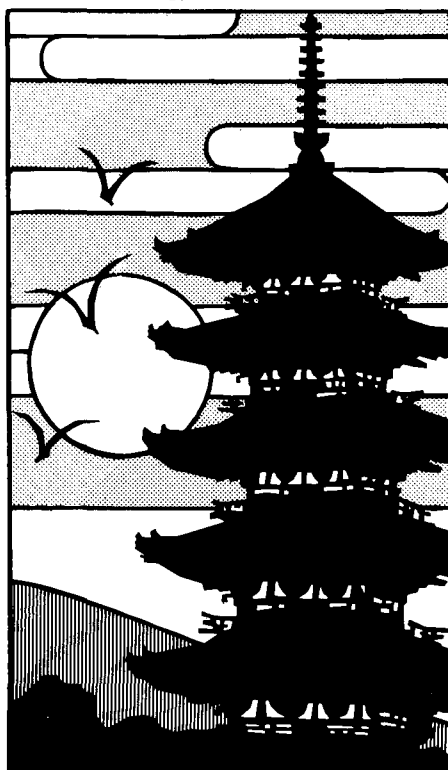
that in so short a space, we should have made such large strides towards fulfilling the predictions of our transatlantic foe! 'leave them to themselves, and their government will soon dissolve.' . . . What stronger evidence can be given of the want of energy in our governments than these disorders? If there exists not a power to check them, what security has a man for life, liberty, or property?

But the weakness of the American republic did not diminish Washington's republican ardor. He was outraged by the very idea of rebellion against a republican government, but he was also outraged by the reaction of Americans who talked without horror of substituting a monarch for the ineffective Congress. And after the Massachusetts

government finally succeeded in putting down the rebels, he objected to the fact that they had been disfranchised. To deprive them of political rights was as much an abuse of power as the failure to use power effectively against them in the first place.

When Washington became the first president of the United States, he brought to the office a determination to establish what he called "a national character," by which he meant something like national reputation. It was essential, in his view, that the country gain a reputation that would oblige other countries to respect it. "We are a young Nation," he had written in 1783, "and have a character to establish. It behoves us therefore to set out right for first impressions will be lasting, indeed are all in all." And in the years that followed the winning of independence, as the power of Congress continued to wane, his great worry had been that the failure of the states to support the union would "destroy our National character, and render us as contemptible in the eyes of Europe as we have it in our power to be respectable." With an effective national government in operation at last, it became

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possible to establish a proper national character, a reputation that would command respect both at home and abroad. And in his conduct of the presidency Washington bent his every effort toward that end.

He recognized that he was on trial, that the character of the government and the respect accorded it would be measured by the respect that he himself demanded and commanded. As president of a republic he aimed at an elegant simplicity in his style of living, sumptuous enough to escape any imputation of ostentatious poverty, but restrained enough to avoid outright splendor. At the same time he cultivated his characteristic aloofness, even to the point where his critics charged that his condensation smacked of monarchy.

Washington identified the national interest so closely and so personally with the new national government that he could scarcely recognize the validity of any kind of dissent. It is all too easy at the present day to see his impatience with public criticism as intolerance bordering on paranoia. But Washington had borne the brunt of a war that was needlessly prolonged because of the supineness of the central government. He had watched the nation approach the point of dissolution in the 1780s, a development that threatened everything he had fought for. And in the 1790s it was by no means clear that the new government was there to stay. If he greeted criticism with distrust, it was because domestic dissent might belie the character he was seeking to establish for his government, might return the nation to the impotence of the 1780s, might signal to the watching world the predicted collapse of the republic.

In spite of his determination to establish a strong character for the nation, Washington had no yearning for personal power, nor did he want any military adventures of the kind that so often infatuate men who are obsessed with power for its own sake. He did want the United States to grow in strength, for strength must be the ultimate basis of respect. And strength, he was sure, would not come to the United States by going to war. He had

had ample experience that war was the way to poverty, and poverty meant impotence. The way for the country to grow strong, he believed, was to eschew internal dissension and steer clear of the quarrels which he saw were about to envelop the nations of Europe. The United States was encumbered with a French alliance, but as Washington read the terms of it, it did not require the United States to become involved in any quarrel that France might have with other countries, including England. And although he was grateful for the assistance received from France in the winning of American independence, he did not think that gratitude had a place in the determination of national policy. As he had pointed out some years earlier to Henry Laurens, the nation, like other nations, should not be counted on to act beyond its own interest. France in helping Americans during the Revolution had acted out of self-interest—her interest to have England weakened by loss of the colonies. Now, as Washington saw it, the main interest of the United States was to recover from the economic exhaustion incurred, however needlessly, in the Revolutionary War. The means of recovery, he thought, lay in exploiting the American land to produce as much as possible for sale to nations less fruitfully engaged in quarreling with one another.

WASHINGTON had no difficulty in persuading the new Congress or the advisers whom he appointed to his cabinet that a policy of neutrality was the way to let the United States develop its powers. But his advisers never understood the operation of the policy as well as Washington did. Jefferson was bent on making a weapon of neutrality, on wringing concessions, especially from England, in return for American neutrality. Hamilton, on the other hand, was highly conciliatory in trying to restore commercial relations with England, and went almost past the limits of neutrality in his obsession with the ideological dangers presented by the French Revolution. Although Washington was closer to Hamilton than to Jefferson, neither of the two men fully grasped the sophistication of their chief's policy for the nation.

Washington realized that the people of the United States would benefit from high prices for their agricultural exports while European farmers were distracted by war. But other than this benefit, he did not propose to take advantage of the

distress of any country in order to wring concessions from it, because he was convinced that benefits thus obtained would not last. In 1791, when he was about to appoint Gouverneur Morris (he of the slap on the back) as minister to France, he warned him against seeking to obtain favorable treaties from countries in distress, "for unless," he said, "treaties are mutually beneficial to the Parties, it is in vain to hope for a continuance of them beyond the moment when the one which conceives itself to be over-reached is in a situation to break off the connexion." A treaty had to match the powers and interests of the parties making it. Otherwise it would be indeed a scrap of paper. Washington signed two treaties as president of the United States. The first one, Jay's Treaty with England, was extremely unpopular; and Washington himself did not think well of it. But he signed it because he thought that commercial relations with England would be worse with no treaty than with this one. The popular outcry against it did not move him and indeed struck him as senseless, because he believed that the United States in 1795 was not sufficiently powerful and England was not sufficiently weak to have negotiated a better treaty. And even if Jay had been able to get a better treaty, Washington thought there was no reason to suppose that it would have been better kept than the peace treaty, in which England had agreed to give up her posts in the Northwest Territory. The fact that England had not yet given up the posts and the fact that Jay had not secured any further agreement for her to give them up was no surprise to Washington. The American negotiators at the peace conference had got more from England than America's bargaining powers really entitled her to. England's retention of the northwest posts was therefore to be expected and was no reason for rejecting Jay's treaty if it might improve the commercial situation of the United States in any way.

Washington could afford to be equally calm about Pinckney's Treaty with Spain. That treaty was almost as popular with the American people as Jay's had been unpopular, and it has generally been hailed as a triumph because it secured the American right to navigate the Mississippi. Yet it merely obtained what Washington was certain the United States would get anyhow. After the Revolutionary War settlers had poured into the western country in such num-

Coming:

Justin Kaplan on
General Grant.

bers that by 1795 Spain could not safely have denied them the right to export their produce down the Mississippi. What prompted the concession was not Pinckney's negotiating skill but the expanding American strength in the west and the strong character that Washington had conferred on the national government. Treaties, in Washington's view, were not important. What was important was power.

Washington was not a man of many talents. He had none of the range of the brilliant men around him, the intellectual curiosity of a Jefferson, the fiscal genius of a Hamilton. But in his under-

standing of power he left them all behind, as he did the British generals who opposed him and the French who assisted him. When he retired from the presidency after eight years, he had placed the United States on the way to achieving the power that he had aspired to for it. In the years that have followed, that power has grown until there are those who wonder whether it has been a good thing for the world. But at the time it looked like a very good thing indeed. And for better or for worse, it was the work of George Washington, the man who still keeps us all at a distance.

tile power. Each confronted and overwhelmed the indigenous population. For a time, each relied on slave labor, largely imported from abroad. Each had a frontier experience which was crucial in forming national character. Through wars, each gained independence from the metropolitan power to which it had colonial or quasi-colonial status. From such similar pasts each emerged to become a major industrial power in the 20th century.

So much was similar, yet in race relations their development has been curiously different. America developed from racial tyranny to the expectation of ultimate social justice, while South Africa grew from a beginning of relatively tolerant race relations to a totalitarian system of apartheid. The differences are revealing.

From our colonial beginnings, Euro-Americans sought to draw a line between white and non-white, making miscegenation taboo, and defining the offspring of such unions as black, regardless of phenotypic characteristics. Until World War II interracial marriage between whites and blacks was prohibited by law in two-thirds of the nation

Perspective by Incongruity

White Supremacy:

A Comparative Study of American and South African History by George M. Fredrickson

(Oxford University Press; \$19.95)

Too often comparative histories are blatant displays of erudition—clever scholars having mastered a couple of languages and a couple of historical literatures doing balancing acts with common themes and parallel institutions. George M. Fredrickson's new book is a brilliant exception, a model for others to emulate. It is successful because the two historical phenomena he compares genuinely illuminate each other. Honest with his readers, careful to distinguish between what is and what is not comparable, Fredrickson resists the temptation of legerdemain.

Despite its problems, comparative history is destined to play a central role in the future of American history. Not so long ago American history was conceived of as the story of Anglo-Saxon men from the first settlements to the present. Scholarship of the last two decades—black and ethnic history, women's history, Native American history, "looking at history from the bottom up"—has shattered this convenient consensus. Like the society itself, American history today is fragmented into sub-groups. This fragmentation has been an essential step in the necessary demystification of our past, but, like Humpty Dumpty, it will take more

than good intentions to unify the story once again. A step toward that new unity might be to use the techniques of comparative history, to study themes as they are articulated in more than one ethnic history, to work toward a synthesis on which to build a new national history, one that honors the varieties of its peoples' experiences. Most comparative histories have been too adventure-some—comparing American slavery and Russian serfdom, for instance—and, therefore, problematic. When we begin to look at our own histories in comparative terms, George Fredrickson's book will show us how to go about it.

Fredrickson has focused on a single theme. Noting that the United States and the Union of South Africa have shared the complex of attitudes and behavior called white supremacy, he has chosen to compare race relations in those two countries. The result is an intellectually engaging study that illuminates black-white relations as no other book in recent years has done.

Beyond white supremacy, much about these two countries invites comparison. Each originated in the 17th century as a colonial extension of expanding Northern European mercan-

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(including such states as California and Michigan). By contrast, following the Dutch practice in the East Indies, colonial South Africa encouraged miscegenation and intermarriage, hoping to create a Europeanized and Christianized population on which to build a burgher society. The offspring of such unions were not only accepted in society: in the early years they constituted its mainstay. The natural course was to "pass" into white society; some blacks even assumed positions of leadership and authority. In 17th- and 18th-century South Africa there was no cause for a Thomas Jefferson-Sally Hemmings scandal, nor would any South African leader be embarrassed, as Andrew Jackson was, over rumors of an African forebear.

SUCH CASUAL racial attitudes would not last in South Africa, and black Africans as well as those visibly mixed would, in the 19th century, suffer a diminution of rights and privileges as Afrikaners resisted Dutch, then British, efforts from afar to guarantee "equality before the law." Still, it was not until the 1950s that Cape Coloreds finally were excluded from citizenship rights, by then exclusive to whites. Ironically, the full growth of apartheid came only in the very decade when the United States Supreme Court struck down the "separate but equal" doctrine, removing government sanction from

customary racial segregation and discrimination, for the first time denying official support to white supremacy.

Such differences loom in importance. The fact that South Africa gained its independence in the 20th rather than the 18th century is consequential. The United States was born in the Enlightenment, and the founders imbibed the Enlightenment ideology about the rights of man and popular sovereignty. The rationale of the new government, despite contradictions in practice, assumed that men were born equal and that just governments rested on the consent of the governed. Such assumptions clashed with slavery and systemic racial discrimination. White Americans did not intend to share political or economic power with blacks, yet their political faith argued that they ought to.

White South Africans were never deeply troubled by such contradictions. Their race relations were always more expedient and pragmatic. Americans, deeply ambivalent, have been attracted to racialist theories explaining differences in terms of native capacities rather than circumstance and systematic oppression. South Africans have been more frank, stating without embarrassment that their racial policies are devices for maintaining themselves in power.

Fredrickson does not discuss it, but Americans also differ from South Africans in their sense of mission. Our sense of our history has been more than the imperialistic "white man's burden," more than the pretensions of extending "civilization." We think providentially about our past and purpose. America, said Walt Whitman, was a "nation of nations"; it was everyone's chance to be born again on becoming American. From John Winthrop's demand that the Massachusetts Bay Colony be as "a city upon a hill" to President Carter's hope that America be a beacon of human rights to the world, we have set ourselves up as exemplars for the rest of mankind. From the point of view of America's oppressed and underprivileged, our exalted sense of mission might have made scant practical difference, but it has been a source of embarrassment, guilt, ambivalence, and of a predisposition—when circumstances made it convenient—to reform.

South Africa's national history provided no such checks to race exploitation. The Dutch and the British imposed distant restraints against legalized discrimination. "Equality before the law"

became a British shibboleth, which by no means implied inattention to class distinctions. Differences in opportunity and social standing in South Africa could be explained in terms of social class instead of race, even when the underprivileged class was exclusively non-white. Poor and marginal whites could be content with a *herrenvolk* ideology which considered all non-whites as aliens.

Self-government for South Africans meant, therefore, freedom from even those mild restraints imposed from outside. Its history in the 20th century is not only a story of growing independence—severing final ties with the British Commonwealth in 1961—but of an untrammelled march toward apartheid. South African national character, rather than being shaped by a sense of mission, is defined by the Boer's Great Trek of the 1830s: a hegira from the world, the building of a citadel against those who threaten Afrikaner survival. Given such a mentality, there would be no impediment to developing a racial system of frank and unmitigated exploitation.

THAT RACIAL exploitation points up another crucial difference between the two countries. Afro-American labor was most heavily exploited in the 18th and 19th centuries. Since then, blacks have had to struggle for a share of industrial employment. The abolition of slavery in the United States and its great industrial take-off occurred simultaneously. One might have thought that blacks would have moved from the plantation to the factory. They did not. Instead, American industry exploited immigrant labor, and blacks remained in a depressed agricultural economy until the labor demands associated with World War I drew them into northern industry. Until then, black and white labor were rarely directly competitive. An American version of *herrenvolk* democracy made whites a privileged labor class, protected against competition with blacks by custom and social pressure, if not by law. The American labor movement achieved its first major successes at the very moment of this "unnatural" competition. Committed to strategies of job control, they were quick to exclude blacks from most trade unions. It has taken Afro-Americans nearly a century to break into American industry and to play any sort of role in the labor movement.

Black African labor, on the other

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hand, was essential to the South African mining industry. Unlike Americans, white South Africans never indulged the myth that blacks had little capacity for industrial labor. Where blacks were barred from certain occupations—as they were by law—it was frankly to preserve white supremacy.

Were South Africans concerned about consistency, apartheid would deprive them of their needed non-white labor. Under apartheid non-whites are domiciled apart from whites; black Africans are attached to “homelands” under tribal governance. Left to their own devices, however, black Africans might well subsist without laboring in the mines. To assure that they do, the government taxes them so that they are obliged to work for money, the principal source of which is white industry.

Despite racist theories, white Americans, except perhaps for 19th-century colonizationists, never adopted anything like apartheid. Some interpreted Darwin to support the belief that Afro-Americans would not survive the competition with whites, but would die off. Some black Americans have thought about “homelands” in Africa or elsewhere. Some few have even pleaded for a separate state. But few blacks or whites have taken this seriously. (Ironically, the American notions closest to apartheid have come from black cultural nationalists.)

Fredrickson’s analysis of white supremacy in South Africa and the United States works well because the societies have so much in common yet, as we have seen, are in crucial ways different. To see them in Fredrickson’s comparison is to gain what Kenneth Burke has called “perspective by incongruity.” With all of his mastery, however, Fredrickson has still not managed to see the whole picture. He has written a history of white supremacy as seen through white, official history. His last book, *The Black Image in the White Mind* (1971), prepared him for the American side of the story and indicates, by its title, Fredrickson’s view of the subject. For this book he has learned Afrikaans and explored South African secondary sources. He has not, however, asked much about what non-whites have done to affect the different manifestations of white supremacy. Yet the images of the black in the Euro-American and Euro-South African minds are what they are because of the blacks these whites encountered. Can we really understand

white supremacy without understanding that?

From the American side, active and articulate Afro-Americans have forcefully made apparent the contradictions between principle and practice. They have kept guilts and ambiguities alive and troubling. In many ways, they have been the conscience of America on human rights. Have non-whites in South Africa played a similar role? Lacking the American ideology of freedom, what role have they played?

Afro-American language, imagination, culture are so ubiquitous in American culture it is impossible to say where one begins or ends. Afro-Americans and non-white South Africans, I suspect, cause different displacements in their respective societies and cultures. It is as if apartheid rules in the South African mind and culture as well as in its social order. If I am right, there is an important element Fredrickson has left untouched.

It is not a strange omission, given the character of American historical writing. Like most American historians, Fredrickson does not fully appreciate that white and black imaginations, behavior, and racial assumptions are the creation of a dialectical interplay. They are both parent and child to each other. This failure is why much American history is either white or black, even after the wonderful work in Afro-American and other ethnic history of the past decade. It also is why the great challenge of comparative history in America is to discover bridges to a new and more inclusive synthesis.

Nathan Irvin Huggins

Nathan Irvin Huggins is W. E. B. DuBois Professor of History and Afro-American Studies and Director of the DuBois Institute at Harvard. His latest book is *Slave and Citizen, The Life of Frederick Douglass* (Little, Brown).

The Problem of the False Self

Prisoners of Childhood

by Alice Miller

translated by Ruth Ward

(Basic; \$11.95)

Narcissism is a word carrying unpleasant overtones. One thinks of narcissistic people as self-absorbed, egotistical, unable to love, and demanding attention. Alice Miller, a practicing psychoanalyst, is concerned to demonstrate that such people deserve compassion rather than condemnation, that they are indeed “prisoners of childhood,” held in solitary confinement, unable to love others because they are unable to love themselves. Indeed, their main problem is that they are alienated from, and unaware of, their own authentic feelings. The false front they present to the world has become so habitual that they themselves take it for real, until depression forces them to discover the true self beneath the mask.

Alice Miller has been deeply influenced by the late Donald Winnicott, a British analyst who started his therapeutic career as a pediatrician, and who became interested in the earliest relation between the child and its mother as

a determinant of later mental health or illness. Winnicott wrote extensively about what he named the problem of the false self. He postulated that certain children, who are often particularly intelligent and sensitive, become aware, at an early age, of parental demands as to how they should be, and strive to conform to these requirements to such an extent that they lose touch with their own, authentic selves. Of course, all children have to be educated, and therefore have to obey their parents to some extent; but Winnicott and Alice Miller mean something deeper. Many parents, perhaps themselves deprived, construct idealized expectations which they anxiously hope their children will fulfill, irrespective of what the children are actually like by nature. In this way, parents can come to live vicariously in their children, who represent unfulfilled parts of the parents themselves. Robust, insensitive children rebel against this parental straitjacket, and,

by refusing to conform, preserve themselves intact. Others, more perceptive but less fortunate, become anxiously aware of every nuance of parental feeling and compliantly conform for fear of losing parental love and approval. It is paradoxical, but to my mind convincing, that it is just those children who begin life as oversensitive to what others are feeling who later find difficulty in forming close and fulfilling relationships. As adults, they either withdraw into an ivory tower of apparently superior solitude or else form partial relationships in which their partners feel a lack of commitment and both are aware that something important is missing.

Alice Miller contends, and I share her opinion, that every child's primary need is to be loved unequivocally for what he or she is as a unique individual. It is only if the child has experienced this kind of love that he can grow up in touch with, and convinced of the validity of, his own emotional experience. Children who have not received the bounty of total acceptance come to think of love as conditional upon achievement and compliance. They have no sense that love will continue through periods of rebellion or failure. As Alice Miller observes, many adults from such backgrounds who come into analysis are not fully aware of what they have missed and at first protest that their parents were loving and concerned. Indeed, they often blame themselves for what they regard as their own deficiencies, and show scant sympathy for themselves as the isolated children they once were. It is only as their real feelings, their "true selves," begin to emerge in the course of analysis that they become aware that they have been "compelled to gratify their parents' own needs at the cost of their own self-realization."

The reason why adults labeled "narcissistic" appear egotistical is because they are compelled to seek substitutes for the unconditional love that they failed to obtain in early childhood. They often gain admiration for their achievements but remain intensely vulnerable to reverses, since they have no inner core of self-esteem on which to rely during periods of failure or disappointment. One patient of Alice Miller's dreamed that she was hanging from a balloon which flew well for a while but which then collapsed into a "little rag." The ease with which spurious self-esteem can thus be punctured could hardly be better illustrated. Depression, because it sometimes forces these pa-

A TIME OF YEAR

Where are we now, then? Unable to remain simply
Autumnal any more, what with markets overfull
Of bad red paintings of late afternoon, I locate
My inner weather for you on the map of the year:
Say it is a spell of cold, of chilled nights in the midst
Of a long Indian Summer struck dumb with its own
Fair *longueurs*, dreaming away from what has almost come.
Early autumn looked to be the time of ripening
Truth, and late birds sang of a long moment of shadows
Coming home early to roost in the perches of light.
But the deep, skeptical frost has come and left its first
Hard mark along the surface of the grounds of our hope.
Here is my time, though desire come and go like daylight.

John Hollander

tients to seek help, therefore can be a valuable pointer toward insight and recovery rather than a liability. How many psychiatrists who, faced with a depressed patient, immediately prescribe anti-depressant drugs, have any inkling that depression can have a positive function? Very few, in my experience, although C. G. Jung always taught that neurotic symptoms should be regarded as attempts at self-regulation by a mind that was somehow aware of its divergence from a balanced state.

Alice Miller, who is not only a perceptive analyst, but is also well-read, quotes Beckett and Hermann Hesse as examples of the kind of person she is describing. In Hesse's case, we not only have his own writings, but letters and diaries of his parents. In his novel *Demian*, Hesse describes a household, clearly based on his own home, which is so idealized and pure that the child whose ordinary naughtiness is not accepted becomes convinced that he is in essence evil. When Hesse was seven, his mother wrote: "From the 21st of January to the 5th of June he lived wholly in the boys' house and only spent Sundays with us. He behaved well there but came home pale, thin and depressed. The effects are decidedly good and salutary. He is much easier to manage now." Other writings clearly demonstrate Hesse's parents' complete lack of sympathy with his growing individuality. Although Alice Miller does not mention the book, Hesse's novel *Steppenwolf* is a wonderfully accurate portrayal of the narcissistic, alienated man.

One interesting observation that the author derives from her interviews with candidates for the profession of

psychoanalyst, and also, one suspects, from her own introspection, is that psychoanalysis is an attractive profession for those who, in childhood, have developed the exaggerated awareness of parental needs and wishes which has already been described. "These children," she affirms,

eventually develop a special sensitivity to unconscious signals manifesting the needs of others. No wonder that they often choose the psychoanalytic profession later on. Who else, without this previous history, would muster sufficient interest to spend the whole day trying to discover what is happening in the other person's unconscious? But the development and perfection of this differentiated sensorium—which once assisted the child in surviving and now enables the adult to pursue his strange profession—also contains the roots of his narcissistic disturbance.

My own observation of myself and colleagues, recorded in a chapter on "The Personality of the Psychotherapist" in my book *The Art of Psychotherapy* (Methuen) leads me whole-heartedly to agree with Alice Miller's conclusion. I would, however, like to add that some children who develop sensitive antennae do so because their parents are physically ill rather than imperceptive or unloving. A child with an ailing mother may have to learn never to make demands upon her which might tire her, and thus come to give invariable precedence to the needs of the other rather than to his own.

This short book is not only full of wisdom and perception, but written in a style which, for the most part, avoids the use of psychoanalytic jargon. Whether this is due primarily to the

author is hard to tell, since the book is translated from the German by Ruth Ward. However, one can recommend it without reservation to the intelligent layman as well as to the large army of professionals on both sides of the Atlantic who in varying ways are concerned with "therapy." In the US particularly, there is a tendency for psychiatric books to be tomes which say more and more about less and less. Here is one in which

valuable material is packed tight with no superfluous padding. I hope that its small size will not prevent it from receiving the attention it richly deserves.

Anthony Storr

Anthony Storr's most recent book is *The Art of Psychotherapy* (Methuen). He is a British psychoanalyst.

A Monumental Philosopher

Jean-Paul Sartre—Philosophy in the World by Ronald Aronson

(NLB/Verso, distributed by Schocken Press; \$25, \$9.95 paper)

In the summer of 1979, shortly after the death of Herbert Marcuse, an Italian journalist writing a memorial article for the popular magazine *L'Europeo* phoned me for information. In passing, he registered surprise at the relative lack of public response in America to Marcuse's death and posited a hypothetical comparison. Imagine, he said, what the reaction would be to Jean-Paul Sartre's death in France. When Sartre did die on April 15 of the following year, the journalist's intuition of a vastly different response was more than justified. A spontaneously assembled crowd of some 50,000 people accompanied Sartre's body to the cemetery in Montparnasse where it was cremated. Voluminous tributes appeared in the French press, including special issues of such newspapers as *Le Matin* and *Liberation*. Intellectual foes from Louis Althusser on the left to Raymond Aron and André Glucksmann on the right expressed their sense of loss. Even Giscard d'Estaing, who paid Sartre the unusual homage of a visit to the hospital where he died, publicly praised him as "one of the great lights of intelligence of our time," a remark that one can scarcely imagine Jimmy Carter making about Herbert Marcuse.

The contrast between the public reactions to the deaths of Marcuse and Sartre bears witness, of course, to the very different status of intellectuals in France and America. The French take them more seriously when they are alive, and, at least since the legendary funeral

of Victor Hugo in 1885, know how to honor them in death as well. Beyond this very general difference, the contrast also expresses the far greater receptivity of French cultural life to critical ideas, as Sartre's "radical conversion" to Marxism from existentialism had, if anything, increased his popular impact. And, needless to say, it says something very obvious about the extraordinary figure of Sartre himself, who, through an unparalleled outpouring of words in a wide variety of forms, captured and held the normally fickle imagination of the French public for more than four decades. Whereas Marcuse's moment in history was confined to the years immediately around 1968, Sartre had been at center stage ever since the publication of his philosophical novel, *La Nausée*, in 1938.

In one important sense, however, the difference in the public reception of their ideas ironically can be seen as reflecting less positively on the "success" of Sartre's intellectual project than on Marcuse's. For whereas the latter always remained an outsider, in no danger of being publicly mourned by an American president, Sartre, despite his best efforts, had become by his death a kind of institution. Those efforts, it should be immediately acknowledged, were fierce and unrelenting, as the process of institutionalization began well before his end. In fact, as early as 1945, Sartre protested that "it is not pleasant to be treated in one's lifetime as a public monument." But, inevitably, his at-

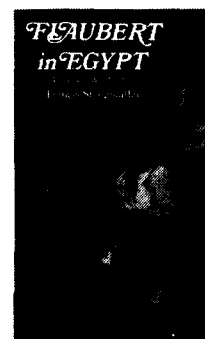
tempts to avoid such treatment became part of the legend into which he was turned. Having memberships offered to the Académie française and the Collège de France, as well as being awarded the Légion d'Honneur and, most prestigious of all, the Nobel Prize for literature, would bring enormous satisfaction to most men. For Sartre they presented an insoluble dilemma. Had he accepted them, he would have been labeled a sell-out to the establishment; but by spurning them, he only fueled the myth of his incorruptibility. When no less an admirer than Charles de Gaulle addressed him as "*mon cher maître*" in 1967, Sartre scornfully replied, "I am no 'master' except for the waiter in the café who knows that I write." The riposte was apt, but in making it, Sartre added to the aura of complete immunity from social convention that had surrounded his name ever since the media discovered him sitting in *Les Deux Magots* after the Liberation.

In the terms he made famous in *L'Être et le Néant*, Sartre's *pour-soi*, his undefined, free subjectivity, was forever being transformed into *en-soi*, into reified objectivity, through the categorizing gaze of others. As that book so tor-

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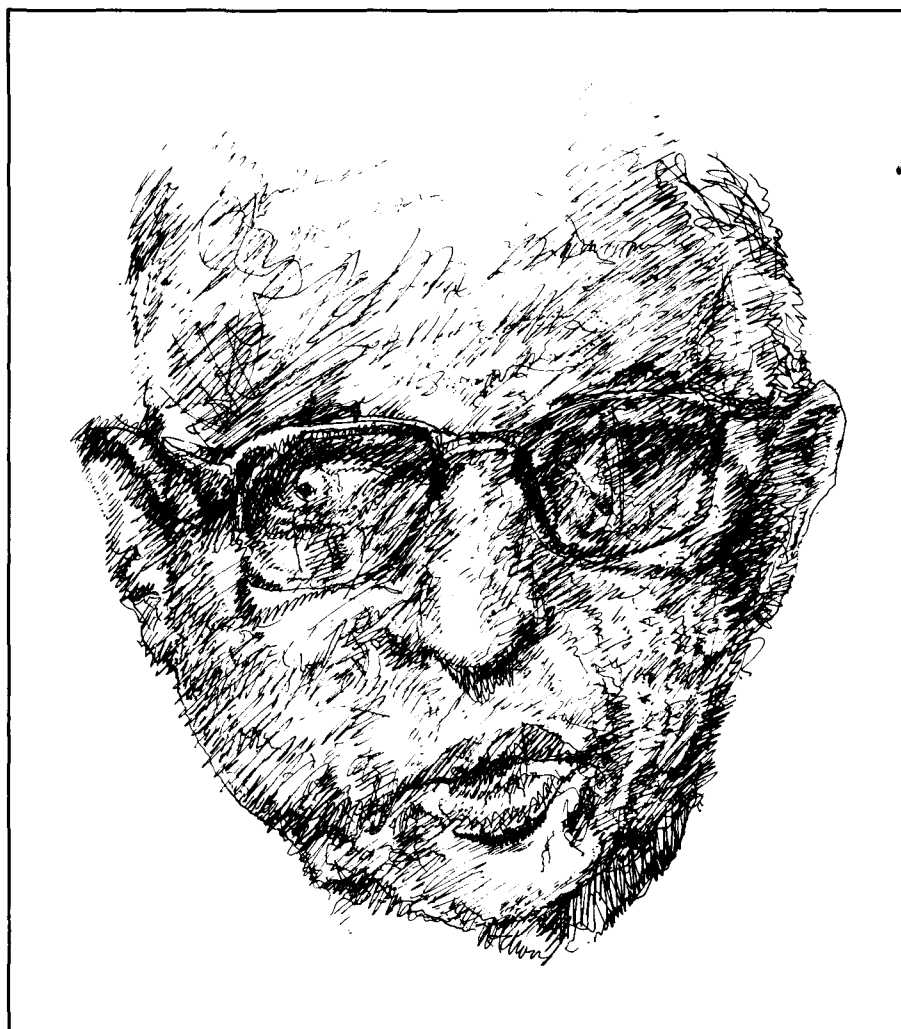
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tuously demonstrated, merely wanting to escape living in "bad faith," the result of accepting such objectification, was not sufficient to avoid it. Reflecting on his youthful pretensions in *Les Mots*, Sartre saw how much he was complicitous in this dilemma: "I chose as my future the past of a great immortal and I tried to live backwards. I became completely posthumous." However vigorously Sartre may have struggled to escape the domestication of his thought and the deification of his person, his efforts, both early and late, were largely in vain. His *chemins de la liberté*, as Denis Hollier recently put it, were more *chemins de la captivité*.

If indeed, despite himself, Sartre became something of a public monument, one of the clearest manifestations of that status was the remarkable body of critical literature devoted to his work and life, a literature no less monstrous in extent than his own prodigious corpus. A recent bibliography lists more than 7,000 separate items on him in a multitude of languages, surely the largest body of commentary devoted to any thinker of our century. And the end appears to be nowhere in sight. In English alone, the last three years have seen Dominick LaCapra's *A Preface to Sartre*, Mark Poster's *Sartre's Marxism*, the first installment of Istvan Meszaros's two-volume *The Work of Sartre*, Joseph Fell's *Heidegger and Sartre*, and most recently, Ronald Aronson's long-awaited *Jean-Paul Sartre—Philosophy in the World*. LaCapra's critique is written from a Derridean point of view, Meszaros's is largely Lukácsian in inspiration, Poster's remains close to the later Sartre in orientation, Fell's plays Heidegger off against Sartre, and Aronson's may be said in large measure to be Marcusean.

During the 1960s Aronson studied philosophy with Marcuse at Brandeis and in 1969 delivered an impassioned open letter entitled "Dear Herbert" to him at the fifth and last meeting of the Socialist Scholars Conference. Testifying to Marcuse's importance in his intellectual and political development, Aronson's letter nonetheless registered a certain protest against the remoteness of his mentor's tone. "Yours is a journey," Aronson complained, "I can take with my intellect only—not with my imagination, my feeling, my guts."

There remains, in fact, much of Marcuse's intellect in Aronson's new book; his teacher's 1948 review of *L'Être et le Néant*, which Aronson calls its "most penetrating critique," serves as the basis



Jean-Paul Sartre by David Schorr

for his analysis of Sartre's existentialist period. Aronson's attack on the implicit positivism in Sartre's abstract confrontation of subjective consciousness with an already finished world, unmediated by that consciousness, for example, is distinctly Marcusean in origin. But preserved as well is Aronson's impatience with the distanced, overly intellectual, disengaged quality of Marcuse's theorizing. Although it would be an unfair trivialization of this far more substantial work to call it "*Cher Jean-Paul*," many of the same impulses energizing "Dear Herbert" are present here as well. In both places, Aronson mixes admiration for a radical role model with disappointment over the model's ultimate imperfection. In both places, he projects onto this figure what surely must be some of his own discontent at not achieving the unity of theory and practice that he seems to demand of radical intellectuals. As his introductory remarks on the agonizing 14-year genesis of the book indicate, Aronson's personal, let us say existential, involvement with Sartre, whom he never met,

is no less intense than with Marcuse, his actual mentor.

In that introduction, Aronson tells us that he began with a traditional Marxist bias against Sartre and slowly advanced to a more balanced assessment of his merits. But for all his movement in this direction, his account still reads essentially like an indictment, or at least like the lament of a would-be, but disillusioned, acolyte. The burden of his case against Sartre is easily summarized, a service that Aronson himself provides rather too frequently in his text. "The central problems of Sartre's development," he contends, "were rooted in his inability to overcome his original terms." Those terms were an unmediated and overly rigid opposition between the individual and the world, which, despite all of Sartre's later efforts, led to a grim view of the prospects for collective human emancipation. Despite Sartre's many attempts, both theoretical and political, to overcome the antinomy at the root of his thought and to think dialectically—as for example, his attempt to make sense of individual life

histories in the context of specific con-
straining situations—the residual Car-
tesian dualism in his philosophy led to
an essentially pessimistic outlook. This
unregenerate individualism, Aronson
maintains, led him to posit freedom
more as an escape from the world than
as something to be realized in it. “From
L’Imagination to *L’Etre et le Néant* and . . .
right down to *L’Idiot de la famille*—Sartre’s
existentialism,” he writes, “was preoc-
cupied with patterns of withdrawal,
and with situations so adverse as to
tempt us to withdraw.”

Such an argument is not difficult to
sustain when examining Sartre’s purely
existentialist period, and indeed it has
long been a staple of the commentaries
on it. But Aronson wants to show that,
for all of Sartre’s recognition of the
inadequacies of his initial problematic,
he failed to overcome them, even in his
most Marxist moods. Through pene-
trating analyses of Sartre’s plays, which
he sees as the best examples of Sartre’s
attempt to write as an engaged intellec-
tual, and of such programmatic defenses
of that engagement as *Qu’est-ce que la
littérature?*, Aronson traces the ultimate
failure of Sartre’s search for a philos-
ophy truly “in the world.” Even the
literary work that Aronson sees as
most nearly successful in this regard, *Le
Diable et le bon Dieu*, only partially realizes
its promise because the message of
solidarity it preaches is dramatically
unconvincing.

IN ARGUING his position, Aronson
does illuminate the peculiar pattern
of oscillating commitments that marks
Sartre’s career, a career that began with
an almost magical faith in the redemp-
tive power of the written word. Later,
as he shows, Sartre overreacted to
what he called his writer’s “neurosis” by
throwing himself too avidly into the
political realm. Determined to act “real-
istically,” he became an uncritical apol-
ogist for communism or a self-flagellat-
ing celebrant of third world violence. At
other times, he allowed his disillusion-
ment with the results of such a decision
to lead once again to a form of with-
drawal. Most acutely in the period after
1968, so Aronson contends, Sartre failed
to keep the antinomies of his existence
together. At the same time, as he fever-
ishly participated in *gauchiste* politics on
the streets of Paris, he devoted his intel-
lectual energies to an excruciatingly
detailed psychological analysis of that
most anti-political of artists, Flaubert.
Sartre’s attempt to become a fully inte-

grated political intellectual, a living em-
bodiment of the unity of theory and
practice, thus for Aronson produced
only a valiant failure.

Even in the work that most com-
mentators see as Sartre’s greatest direct
contribution to Marxist theory, his *Critique de la raison dialectique*, Aronson dis-
cerns the debilitating effects of his orig-
inal and persistent problematic. Al-
though in that work Sartre strives to
show how meaningful groups can be
formed from the integration of individ-
ual practices, his still potent existential
ontology, his *a priori* positing of an
opposition between subjectivity and ob-
jectivity, prevents him from grasping
the proper means to do so. He fails,
Aronson complains, to understand the
dialectical interpenetration of the social
and the individual, preferring instead to
privilege the latter over the former. His
insistence on the fundamental impor-
tance of scarcity as a human reality,
moreover, leads him in Aronson’s view
to posit it as part of the human condi-
tion, rather than as a transient phase of
capitalist development. And his untem-
pered pessimism about human relations
prevents Sartre from grasping the posi-
tive sources of interpersonal coopera-
tion that make life more than a Hobbes-
ian war of all against all.

Whether or not Aronson’s reading of
the *Critique* is fully convincing—Poster,
for example, makes a powerful counter-
argument for the historicity of Sartre’s
concept of scarcity—it must be seen and
judged as part of his larger argument.
Its success in turn stands or falls on the
persuasiveness of the resolution Aron-
son offers to Sartre’s alleged dilemma,
his own way out of the antinomies so
starkly manifested in Sartre’s existen-
tial struggle.

Unfortunately, it is precisely at this
point that Aronson most lets us down.
For the alternative he presents is little
more than a series of clichéd political
slogans rather than a serious theoretic-
al or historical argument. Indeed, Aron-
son’s position rests on little more than
an unexamined faith in the traditional
Marxist ideal of a perfect unity of the-
ory and practice in which the radical
intellectual is able to achieve “solidar-
ity” with the oppressed and progressive
forces of mankind. Aronson’s faith that
such a possibility exists seems grounded
in no less abstract a belief in the ulti-
mately progressive nature of history.
“What is missing in Sartre,” he com-
plains, “is any sense of our historical
progress towards a real, an ultimate

breakthrough.” That he believes such a
progress really exists comes through in
various places in his text, as for example
in his castigation of Sartre in his essays
on Cuba for not “letting himself be
governed by a rigorous, objective logic,”
or his explanation of the failure of the
second volume of the *Critique* on the
basis of its not revealing “a single intel-
ligible history” created by the class
struggle.

BUT WHAT precisely this unified
and coherent history would look
like Aronson neglects to tell us. Nor
does he explain precisely with whom
Sartre was supposed to have achieved
his solidarity, that “engagement with,
not on behalf of, the oppressed” that
Aronson finds so lacking in Sartre’s
work. The Gramscian concept of an
“organic intellectual” at one with the
working class, which seems to inform
Aronson’s work without ever being
explicitly stated, is never really tested
for historical plausibility. If Aronson
had paused to do so, he would have
realized that Sartre was by no means
unique in failing to achieve the integra-
tion of theory and practice, the absolute
fusion of philosophy and the world.
There is, in fact, not a single instance of
a Western Marxist intellectual, even
deeply committed ones like Aronson’s
teacher, Marcuse, who lived up to this
ideal.

In accounting for Sartre’s own inade-
quacy in this regard, Aronson concen-
trates solely on the specific conditions
of Sartre’s personal development. Be-
ginning with an examination of his
“cloistered existence” as a child, Aron-
son claims that Sartre’s freedom from
money worries after his initial literary
success (his publisher, Gallimard, gave
him a permanent monthly wage) and
his lack of familial ties left him “per-
manently out of circuit in relation to the
daily material pressures suffered not
only by the oppressed and exploited,
but also by virtually everyone else in
society.” This is in itself a curious argu-
ment—why an intellectual with a fam-
ily to support and tenure to worry
about is more likely to achieve some
sort of uncompromised unity of theory
and practice is far from self-evident—
but even more troubling, it ignores the
important way in which Sartre was
indeed very much “in the world”:
through the process of institutionaliza-
tion mentioned above. Aronson himself
implicitly recognizes this reality when
he observes, “if Sartre was so funda-

mentally unable to see beyond the categories of bourgeois society, it had to be in part because the peculiar consequences of his celebrity made some of the most negative and mystifying features of capitalist society his own daily routine." What he neglects to understand, however, is that there was never any viable exit out of this dilemma for Sartre. Philosophy "in the world" meant just as much the transformation of the philosopher into a public monument as solidarity with the oppressed. Sartre, to his credit, heroically tried to change the terms of this struggle by angrily rejecting the overtures of the established powers, but he discovered that the anti-establishment powers, most notably the French Communist party, were no less intent on using him for their own ends.

Sartre's failure, such as it was, cannot therefore be traced primarily to the inadequacies of his original problematic, serious as they may have been, but rather to the situation in which he was trapped. It is thus not "perhaps unjust to demand of Sartre that he join in thought what remains sundered in experience," as Aronson in a moment of reflection concedes; it is most certainly

unjust. Even those radical intellectuals who escaped monumentalization, like Marcuse, found themselves unable to achieve solidarity with "the oppressed," that flawless integration of theory and practice Aronson querulously demands of them. If he has found in his own career the formula to do so, he should share it with the rest of us, rather than hectoring those who tried and could not fully succeed. The true lesson of Sartre's life, if indeed it can be reduced to any simple homily, is not that a mistaken ontology prevents good politics, but rather that despite the pessimistic implications of thought, the will can still overcome resignation. As Sartre himself put it in the last interview he granted before his death, "to me the idea of failure has, at this moment, no solid basis: on the contrary, hope as far as it is the relation of man to his goal, a relation which exists even if the goal is not attained, is what remains most present in my thoughts."

Martin Jay

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this century that popularity with the mass reading public has been a disqualifying factor for writers who might wish that their books, in addition to selling well, be appraised earnestly and objectively.

But King's real stigma—the reason he is not perceived as being in competition with *real* writers—is that he has chosen to write about ghoulies and ghosties, about things that go bump in the night. Rats and vampires, necromancers and mind-readers, deadly plagues and telekinetic children: it may sound silly but, as King is well aware (all of his work is permeated with his knowledge of and affection for the clan of writers he has joined), there's a long, as the saying goes, and honorable tradition.

It's a familiar list, these distinguished folk who've been intrigued with what Lovecraft termed "the overtones of strangeness in ordinary things": Dickens, Henry James, Kipling, Walter de la Mare, de Maupassant. And there are many best known for their work in the horror genre alone: J. Sheridan Le Fanu, Bram Stoker, Arthur Machen, Algernon Blackwood, M. R. James. References to these greats (as well as the small change of the genre—for example, monster movie character actors Rondo Hatton, Elisha Cook Jr., and Albert Dekker a.k.a. "Dr. Cyclops") are dotted throughout the King oeuvre. It is apparent that he has read widely and appreciatively in SF, fantasy, and supernatural literature.

King began by borrowing freely. In his collection of short stories, *Night Shift* (1978), two tales in particular call to mind earlier classics: "Jerusalem's Lot" (which sets the scene for the novel *Salem's Lot*) resembles Lovecraft's "The Case of Charles Dexter Ward" and "Gray Matter" seems to owe a bit too much to Arthur Machen's "The Novel of the White Powder." But overall, King has been moving in the direction of admirable originality; it is no mean trick to make the here-and-now creepy, without recourse to gothic ruins or the Carpathian Mountains.

Firestarter is dedicated to Shirley Jackson and takes its epigraph from Ray Bradbury, another writer whom King often calls to mind, specifically when he elegizes small-town America. To borrow an expression from Henry James (he used it to describe *The Turn of the Screw*), *Firestarter* is "an excursion into chaos," much as was *Carrie*, another novel in which a young female mind

A Master of the Macabre

Firestarter
by Stephen King

(Viking; \$13.95)

H. P. Lovecraft once called Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The House of the Seven Gables* "New England's greatest contribution to weird literature." Pace Hawthorne scholars, there's a new contender, out of Maine, for the title. At least booksellers today would be unanimous in citing Stephen King, author of *Carrie*, *The Shining*, *Salem's Lot*, *The Stand*, *The Dead Zone*, and now *Firestarter*, best sellers all, as the northeast's preeminent scribe of the spooky.

King has not been taken very seriously, if at all, by the critical establishment. Unfortunately for him, it's all too easy to take cheap shots at his material by lifting bits of it out of context; what is ghastly when the mood has been set can be risible when the lights are up, so to speak. Dorothy L. Sayers, in her

shrewd introduction to *The Omnibus of Crime* (1928), put it this way: "In nothing is individual fancy so varied (and capricious as in its perception of the horrible. To one person [a story] is terrible beyond all imagination; to another, [it] is merely grotesque." But this peculiarity of the genre is not King's fault, nor can he be blamed for being financially successful, either, although in *Salem's Lot* the protagonist, a novelist, does admit, "Art is wonderful, but just once I'd like to pull a big number out of the hat." This same hero speaks of producing a "book scary enough to make me a million dollars." King was then already on his way to becoming an occult plutocrat and was obviously conscious of the effect he could create with such autobiographical frankness. It is really only in

could upend the fixed laws of nature.

This time, however, the child is a grade-schooler, not a sexually strait-jacketed adolescent: Charlene Roberta McGee, a precocious seven-year-old when the story begins, is on the lam with her father, Andy, running from minions of "the Shop." Although the Shop has a proper title—Department of Scientific Intelligence—King recognizes the sinister aura established by a bland nickname. Primed by le Carré and Ludlum, the reader is not at all surprised to learn that the bogeyman depends on taxpayers' dollars. But why, we are anxious to learn, for the paranoiac dread descends immediately as the story opens, are a nice young dad and his little girl being persecuted in such an extreme fashion?

Flashbacks reveal that Andy and Vicky, the woman who became his wife, had volunteered as guinea pigs in a drug-testing experiment back when they were seniors in college. Their encounter with "di-lysergic triune acid"—administered by a faculty member, yet secretly controlled by the Shop—is an episode of unsettling gruesomeness that doesn't really end when the effects ostensibly have worn off. Not only do Andy and Vicky find themselves afflicted with low-grade psychic powers, but their genes are somehow affected as well. They realize the extent of the problem when the infant Charlene shows herself to be capable, if annoyed, of sizzling up the hairs on her teddy bear.

During the decade following the experiment, the Shop has kept close watch over the surviving participants (only Andy, Vicky, and one other don't expire in some unpleasant way). The McGees, unaware of the surveillance, believe themselves to be the only ones who know Vicky can open and shut the refrigerator door just by thinking about it, or that Charlie is a tiny human blowtorch. However, their days as an odd but happy family are numbered: the Shop, not surprisingly, wants Charlie and wants her bad. After all, Charlie may be the beginning of a whole new race of human beings with astounding abilities. At the very least, since she has the potential "power to crack the planet in two like a china plate in a shooting gallery," she's liable to be a pawn in the arms race and must be "persuaded to use her powers for the good of the country."

Such is *Firestarter's* scenario. The bulk of it is King's characteristic long-winded-

ness; the rest is pursuit-and-flight, the McGees caught in the toils of the Shop, and the anticipation of those moments when Charlie shows herself to be "capable of manufacturing hell, or a reasonable facsimile." Yet the whole is greater than the sum of the parts, and once again King has given the supernatural epic a good name, for those not afraid to meet it on its own terms. Though an inelegant writer—he's no M. R. James—King impresses, finally, by virtue of his enthusiasm and self-confidence, his faith in his own imaginative powers.

Some may object that King's writing is too enthusiastic, or, at least, too energetic. A true son of the 1960s, King in all his books makes the music coming out of the era one of his touchstones for decency and sensitivity. At one point in *Firestarter* Charlie is called "Bobbie" McGee. Even his love of parentheses, to indicate thought or menace or to heighten a mood, could be considered writing stereophonically. Sometimes a King novel or story is a veritable lightshow of italics, ellipses, and parentheses; one imagines him drumming it out on an electric typewriter with rock music blaring behind and the occasional blown fuse.

King also has a well-known predilection for brand-name products: Hush-Puppies, Adolph's Meat Tenderizer,

Pledge, Woolco, Sara Lee, Cheez Doodles, Cremora, Hefty Bags, Shakey's Pizza, etc. Certainly these items were missing from Castle Dracula, as were such favorite King expressions as "pissant," "doodly-squat," and "shitcan." King also does very well with making modern appliances and machinery, like lawnmowers and trucks, ominous, even predatory: perhaps he will one day give us a killer Cuisinart.

Stephen King, in short, is not the kind of occult writer who would have gone out and joined a satanic society; brushed by the counterculture, he's still much more likely to be a pillar of the local Kiwanis. But his Sears catalogue horror can be appealing, as it taps everyone from Edgar Allan Poe to Chuck Berry. Moreover, King's fiction fulfills, in its own way, Henry James's dictum that "a good ghost-story . . . be connected at a hundred points with the common objects of life." James might have fastidiously recoiled from King's lumbering prose but he would have understood what he was about.

Michele Slung

Michele Slung has edited two mystery anthologies, *Crime on Her Mind* (Pantheon) and *Women's Wiles* (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich).

The Ambiguities of Independence

Clear Light of Day

by Anita Desai

(Harper & Row; \$11.95)

"Only connect" was E. M. Forster's most famous piece of advice, and his most famous novel is about the near impossibility of carrying it out. In *A Passage to India*, the small moments of connection between friends seem all the more valuable as the riptides of history, social convention, and passion sweep them into misunderstanding and separation. In that book, especially as we read it with hindsight, the oncoming struggles of both India and Pakistan for independence hover over all the action like rarely glimpsed but restless gods who shape the lives of mortals to what may, but probably will not, turn out to be higher purposes.

Anita Desai, an Indian novelist whose father was Bengali and mother German, was barely an adolescent during her country's turmoil over national and religious identity, and much of her work reads like the younger generation's reply to the issues that Forster so presciently and masterfully defined in the 1920s. Beware the loneliness of independence, he warned, remember that it must entail pushing others away. Like Forster, Desai puts her finger directly on the ice that lies at the heart of freedom; she keeps reminding us that it is cold, very cold, and no less cold for being beautiful.

Perhaps the bitterest fights for indi-

viduation take place between brothers and sisters, and *Clear Light of Day*, Desai's third book to be published in this country, is the story of the Das children growing up together, fighting their way apart in order to keep growing, and finally trying as adults to reconnect, all against the backdrop of national partition. Told in flashbacks that tend to blur rather than convey the poignancy of loss, the book first introduces us to the adult sisters: Tara, the younger, now the competent if deferential wife of a diplomat, and unmarried Bim, who at first, with her teaching job and bossy manner, seems by far the more independent of the pair. But is Bim really? Tara asks. Then why did Bim, who used to dream of being a heroine and gypsy, stay at home? Does her gray hair indicate a deeper sterility, one at the very core of her strength?

With these questions and Bim's evasive replies, Desai evokes the mixed blessings of homecoming. On the one hand, no one ever knows us as our families do; those who loved us when we were only primal processes playing hide and seek with identity, and for that reason no relationships run deeper. Yet now that we have grown up and found serviceable identities for seeking and hiding in the larger world, will our families put aside the old labels and respect us for whoever we have become, are becoming?

Bim, whom all believe to be so strong, has not married partly because she would never truckle to a man as Tara does, but also because she has never let go of her older brother, Raja, once a tubercular poet, whom she will not forgive for abandoning her to follow his wife's Moslem family to Pakistan, where he has become a plump, happy, sentimental householder. Hate now binds her to him just as passionately as love once did, and it is only when Tara comes to understand this furious dependence that she can help Bim to let go. For herself, the more conventionally feminine Tara can easily admit dependence on husband and children. The surprise for her, and for Bim in coming to understand her, is recognizing how coolly she chose her husband in the first place as a vehicle for seeing the world, the adventure that her older sister dreamed of but that she has lived. True, she is dependent, but she can switch her dependence from an old hanger to a better one just as efficiently as she unpacks her traveling clothes. For years Tara has felt guilty for having once, on a

picnic (in a scene that is a counterpoint to the bee scene in *A Passage to India*), abandoned Bim to a swarm of angry bees, but she realizes that her real desertion was simply ceasing to need Bim.

Identity and autonomy, Desai is telling us in this interesting book, always amount to trade-offs, compromises, many of them hidden even from ourselves. Just as people who cling may be surprisingly shrewd about where they plunk their weight, so those who appear the most self-sufficient and detached may, in secret, be feeding on old loves that they have reduced to fantasy in order to control. It is the latter striving for detachment that especially fascinates Desai. Like Forster, she admires the transcendent religious impulse in such a letting-go while sharply regretting that it means letting go of so many outstretched hands. For a Christian, Forster suggested, love is personal, inseparable from individuals and their special cases, whereas for an Eastern mystic love is a holistic acceptance so vast that it cannot value any particular over another. Forster deeply felt the wisdom of this, yet asked what it means when "particulars" turn out to be real people who are suffering, begging for our care. Desai does not associate this conflict with East and West; rather, she locates it within each of her characters, and although in the end she urges connection, what she makes most alluring is solitude. Her best scenes sing of withdrawal and stillness, and this is true both thematically, in that her most powerful characters yearn to get away, and technically, in that all her work has a tableau-vivant quality, as if she has arranged her people on a lit-up platform while warning them not to move one unseemly muscle. Perhaps the freest character in this novel, she hints, is Baba, the youngest brother, who has a simplicity of spirit that borders on sainthood—yet that is because Baba is retarded.

From the moment the reader learns that Raja is in Pakistan she can predict that this novel will hinge on a reconciliation, and in that sense it is too schematic. Its real emotional center, however, is the relationship between the sisters, which Desai does not focus on firmly enough. She devotes too much painstaking prose to landscape and scenery and too little to the complex adults she has invented and the changes they work between them. The musical celebration that ends the book is moving and graceful, yet because it is only the

last in a series of static poses it cannot bring dramatic resolution but seems more like a final illustration, tacked on.

There is one new perspective which the younger generation can offer Forster. Desai's characters live in the aftermath of national liberation and to a considerable extent of social liberation, free of foreign imperialism and native superstition alike, reasonably free to invent their lives. Yet they still find it nearly impossible to connect. Forster admired individualism and yearned for connection and could to some extent blame a hidebound, snobbish society for stifling both. Living in a far looser society, Desai finds it more difficult to pin the blame. Although her central characters tend to be women, she nowhere suggests that society spares men the tension between duty to others, need of others, and the longing to transcend such ties. Instead she traces with insight and care the ways that each of us, eagerly, stifles love in quest of an independence that is pure, free, and frigid.

Meredith Marsh

Meredith Marsh's last novel was Eating Cake (Coward, McCann, Geoghegan).

Brief Review

Housekeeping by Marilynne Robinson

(Farrar, Straus & Giroux; \$10.95)

Housekeeping, a beautiful and unusual novel about transience and durability, revolves around familiar objects, details of everyday life. Rummaging through memorabilia in an attic, Ruth, the protagonist, imagines an enormous net dredging the nearby lake in which her mother and grandfather have drowned:

Such a net, such a harvesting, would put an end to all anomaly. . . . There would be a general reclaiming of fallen buttons and misplaced spectacles, of neighbors and kin, till time and error and accident were undone, and the world became comprehensible and whole . . . some general rescue of the sort I imagined . . . would be inevitable. For why do our thoughts turn to some gesture of a hand, the fall of a sleeve, some corner of a room on a particular anonymous afternoon, even when we are asleep, and even when

we are so old that our thoughts have abandoned other business? What are all these fragments for, if not to be knit up finally?

And there are a lot of fragments. Edmund and Sylvia Foster, who live near a glacial lake in a small western town called Fingerbone, have three daughters, Molly, Helen, and Sylvia. Edmund, a railroad employee, dies when a train he is on plunges from a bridge into Fingerbone Lake. The daughters disperse during the next few years; Helen returns seven and a half years later and leaves her two daughters, Ruth and Lucille, on her mother's porch when she isn't around. Minutes later, the car Helen is driving sails from the top of a cliff into the lake, an apparent suicide. Ruth and Lucille are raised by their grandmother; then, when she dies, by her two sisters-in-law; then, when they leave, by their aunt, Sylvia, who's a little crazy. Slowly and awkwardly, Lucille extracts herself from the odd household. The local authorities, believing Sylvia irresponsible, come for Ruth. Sylvia and Ruth, who narrates the story, flee.

The novel is saved from melodrama by its language: it is exquisitely written. Descriptions are striking:

My grandmother . . . began to shrink. Her mouth bowed forward and her brow sloped back, and her skull shone pink and speckled within a mere haze of hair, which hovered about her head like the remembered shape of an altered thing. She looked as if the nimbus of humanity were fading away and she were turning monkey.

Philosophical observations are often luscious:

For need can blossom into all the compensations it requires. To crave and to have are as like as a thing and its shadow. For when does a berry break upon the tongue as sweetly as when one longs to taste it, and when is the taste refracted into so many hues and savors of ripeness and earth, and when do our senses know anything so utterly as when we lack it?

Every sentence of *Housekeeping* is well written. And, as if that isn't remarkable enough, this is Marilynne Robinson's first novel.

Marc Granetz

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The Russians are a great people with immense achievements to their credit. The 19th-century Russian novelists together form an outpouring of human genius comparable to the philosophers of Athens, the prophets of Jerusalem, and the Italian artists and poets of the Renaissance. Russian achievement in science, though perhaps falling short of Stalin's more exuberant pronouncements, is nevertheless far greater than Westerners usually have been willing to concede. In two areas, however, the Russians have been remarkably ungifted: in politics and in economics. Through their long history they have never been able to create and maintain a form of government that was not a tyranny, or an economic order that could keep and feed their people in reasonable comfort. It is therefore extraordinary that it is their political and economic system the Russians feel obliged to export to the rest of the world. Perhaps other nations might follow the same procedure of putting their worst foot forward. If we are to have Russian politics and economics, why should we not have British cooking, French plumbing, German tact, Italian modesty, Jewish flexibility, Greek driving, and South American civil administration? A committee might be appointed to suggest the most appropriate American contribution.

The Moslems already have made two attempts to conquer Europe. The first time it was the Arabs who came from the southwest, conquered Spain, and advanced into France where they were held and repelled at the battle of Poitiers by the French hero Charles Martel. The second time it was the Turks, who came from the southeast and advanced through the Balkans to Vienna where, again, they were met and driven back by the Polish hero John Sobieski. Now the third invasion is in progress, with different soldiers and different weapons and, perhaps, greater chances of success. The heirs of Charles Martel have important oil and banking interests in the Arab world; the heirs of John Sobieski are in exile or in bondage. The assertion of Arab power has begun again in the same place, in Spain. From the *Economist* last month we learned that at a press conference in Madrid the secretary-general of the Arab League made the announcement that Spain would not recognize Israel and, according to

the *Economist*, "the Spanish Foreign Minister," who was also present, "hurriedly assented." The advance from Spain into France is already well under way, with better prospects of success than the Moorish raiders had 1,000 years ago. Third time lucky?

In their concern for the Arabs in general and the PLO in particular, some American blacks have broken new ground in US politics. There is nothing new in the emergence of an American minority as a lobbying group on behalf of their fellows overseas when they see them to be in danger. Polish-Americans have spoken for Poland, Irish-Americans for Ireland, and, most recently, Greek-Americans for Greece. American Jews, most of whom have their roots in countries where they had been persecuted and downtrodden, are interested in Israel rather than in their places of origin. So far, however, American groups have concerned themselves only with those whom they could regard as their kinsmen or, at least, as their co-religionists overseas. The action of American blacks—not on behalf of blacks in Africa or elsewhere but on behalf of Arabs—is thus entirely new. It has been suggested by ill-disposed persons that this is due to ignorance, and that American black militants are not aware of the fact that the true Africans have no more in common with the white and occasionally brown Arab settlers in the north than with the white Afrikaners of the south, both of whom came as conquerors and colonists to the African continent. Black leaders certainly know this fact, which is in any case irrelevant, since Palestinians are not Africans but Asians. Nor should we heed the even more malicious slander that black supporters of Arab causes are bought and paid for. It is true that Arabs have a great deal of experience in such transactions but it is unreasonable to attribute black American attitudes purely to this form of persuasion. No, we must regard this as an unprecedented act of magnanimity, the more remarkable if one considers the role of the Arabs in the enslavement of black Africa. Since some American black leaders now have taken up the Arab cause, perhaps we may hope that others will show a similar spirit of forgiveness and generosity. And who knows, we may yet see American Jews demonstrating on behalf of Germany and

American Armenians working for the Turkish cause.

The Koran strictly prohibits interest, not just usurious or excessive interest but any interest at all, and for pious Moslems the giving and especially the taking of interest is a great sin. In Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, and some other Moslem countries, there has been a remarkable development of interest-free banking in recent years, by which banks lend and borrow money without interest on a basis of shared risk and profit. This has worked remarkably well, and without endangering the immortal souls of either the borrowers or the lenders. The American banks that have held and are still holding Iranian funds do not, however, operate on this principle, and under the terms of the agreement apparently are now to pay accrued interest to their Iranian depositors. President Reagan has disavowed revenge but it would be a cruel revenge on the part of American bankers and officials to tempt the Iranians into sin and expose them to eternal punishment. It is neither fair nor reasonable to expect the Iranians to violate one of the central principles of their religion. It would not, of course, be right for the American banks to profit in any way from the piety of their depositors. Perhaps a solution would be to place the interest owing to the Iranians in a special fund, to be used for mutually agreed pious purposes. One suggestion: establish an office for the promotion of truth and honesty at the United Nations.

France, we now learn, is supplying Mirage war-planes to Iraq. The French might also consider selling the Iraqis another triumph of French technology, well suited to Iraq's political style and security needs: the guillotine. It is less messy than tying people to cars and dragging them through the streets, a form of disposal Iraq often applies to unsuccessful candidates for office, and more photogenic than hanging. This is a consideration of some importance in a country where, though some executions are strictly private, others are not merely public but televised.

George Kane

George Kane is the pen name of a frequent visitor to the Middle East.

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